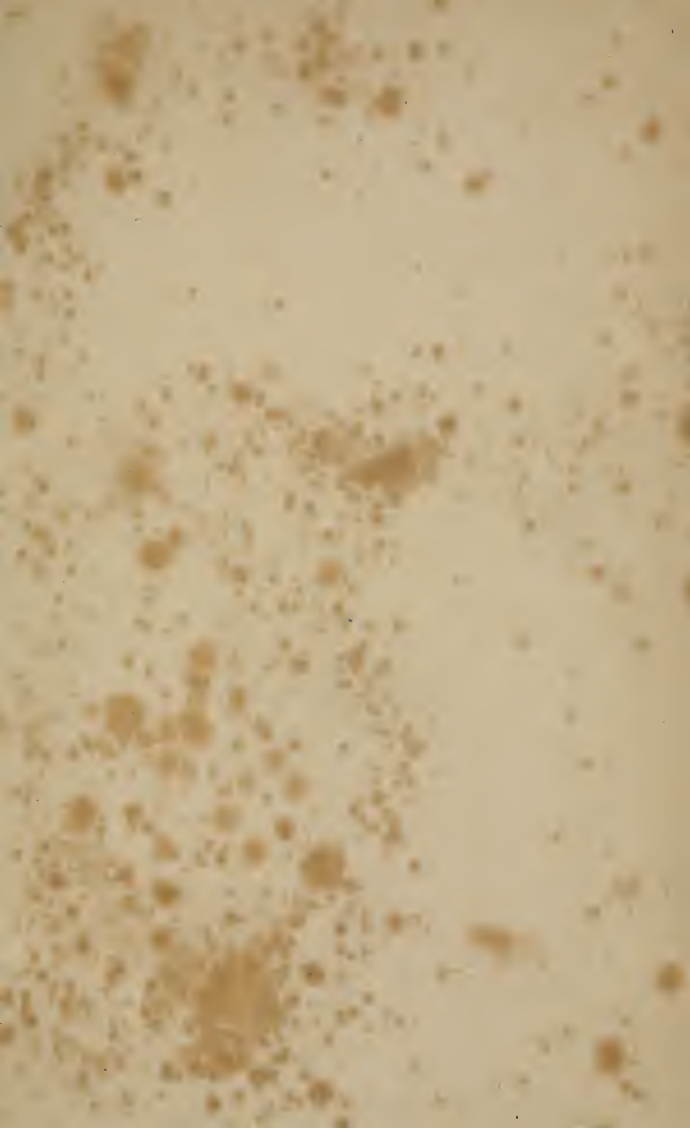


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THE FORTRESS,

AN

HISTORICAL TALE

OF

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY,

FROM RECORDS OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

“What’s he that wishes for more men from England?
“My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin,
“If we are mark’d to die, we are enow
“To do our country loss; and if to live,
“The fewer men, the greater share of honor.

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“No, ’faith, my Lord, wish not a man from England,
“God’s peace, I would not lose so great an honor,
“As one man more, methinks, would share from me
“For the best hopes I have. Don’t wish one more:
“Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
“That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
“Let him depart.”

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES

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THE FORTRESS

AN

HISTORICAL TALE.

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CHAPTER I.

THE chime of midnight was borne faintly on the night breeze to the ears of Sir Pierre de Brézé, and his worthy bailli, Roger le Boutilier, as they paced the northern rampart of Mount Orgueil Castle. To judge from the expression on the countenances of both, their conversation had hitherto been not altogether of an agreeable cast. There was, however, that in the swaggering gait, and over attention to dress on the part of Roger, which might have been expected from a parvenu, who has attained the first important step on the ladder of fortune,

which is to raise him above the humble level assigned to him by nature. A gold chain dangled round his neck, and rings encircled each of his coarse misshapen fingers; his doublet was of sky blue velvet, his mantle of the finest cloth, lined with crimson coloured taffeta; his cap was ornamented with a long white plume; his hose of the same colour as the doublet; his shoes *à la poulaine*.

“ *Ventre St. Gris, Sir Pierre!* ” he exclaimed, stopping short in his walk—some previous remark from de Brézé seemed to have nettled him, —“ you talk of the ill success of your arms, as tho’ ’twere fault of mine! as though I had’nt the subjugation of these stubborn Islanders at heart as much as yourself! Mort Dieu, sir knight, an ye think to spit out your spleen on me, as ye did on poor Messire Perrin Nenfant, ye have mistaken your man! I have done all that mortal can devise or do, but if your knaves can’t prove themselves better soldiers than this pack of poor serfs and fishermen, why it’s no fault of mine!”

“ A pack of devils and wizards, say rather !” vociferated de Brézé, “ had they been aught else, the swords of my brave fellows had mowed them down as easily as a skilful mower would have laid low so many blades of grass with his scythe ! But how the devil could that proud taunting knight, who dubs himself captain, forsooth, have escaped the snare so cunningly set for him, save by the aid of witchcraft ?—did ever man and horse take such a leap before, unless to commit *felo de se* ? Or, did ever steed fly over the ground like the beast he strode ? I have seen many a gallant stallion, many a snow white charger, brought from the plains of Araby, in my time, but never have I seen one that could cut through the air with so heavy a burden at his back as the portly Islander, as did that noble beast ! My life on it, he was worth a king’s ransom ; and truly did it put me out of humour to hear that death had cheated me out of the only portion of the goods and chattels pertaining to the Manor, that I cared to dispute

with ye, Roger—pshaw ! Master Bailli, I mean ! I crave thy indulgence, I know thou lovest to hear the sound of thy new dignity, as well as any fair dame, who has dropped the title of Demoiselle ;* but say, good Master Bailli, thou wouldst not have haggled with me for this small portion of thy booty ? From what I am told, thou hast, in securing the manor of St. Ouen, appropriated full one-third the riches of this poor Isle to thyself ! What sayest thou to this ?”

“ Nothing more nor less, than that it is a goodly Manor, and hath thrice the number of *feux*† of any other, but that even though it be so, a bargain is a bargain, Sir Pierre de Brézé, and though, for the matter of the steed, I would not have thwarted your wishes, still, I consider myself entitled to every lot and jot that shall be found therein, and pertain thereto.”

* In France, at this period, married women retained the title of Demoiselle till their husbands were knighted.

† Hearths or Tenements.

“ Beshrew me, but thy father must have come of the race of Israel, or he ne’er could have had a son so shrewd in his speculations and so pinching in his bargains ! But have no fear, most worthy Roger ; as I am a man to suffer none to purloin or keep from me, what I may have stipulated for ; so am I not that one, to withhold aught of the guerdon I have promised to him who faithfully fulfils an engagement towards me ; so, I repeat, have no fears, the Manor and its appurtenances shall be thine, to have and to hold, with devoirs and relief to thy liege lord, Louis, in lieu of Edward, King of England, who by the by, spite of thy loyal wishes and predictions, seems likely to maintain himself on the throne !”

“ And what is worse,” rejoined Roger, “ if King Louis doth not bestir himself and send ye aid without delay, sir knight, he is likely to maintain his authority here too ! and dispute your captainship with ye ! Then what becomes of my manor,—my new dignity,—and last, though

not least, my head !—I tell ye what, Sir Pierre, though I have told ye so before, there is small wisdom in waiting so supinely King Louis's pleasure ; sith a first message doth not meet attention, send a second, and a third, or go yourself and raise a levy,—anything, rather than sit tamely down, and lose what ye have gained so dexterously."

" Lose it ! By the soul of my father, that will I not, though King Edward and all his army were camped round our fortress ! I will never yield me, even though famine stared me in the face ;—no, I would rather live upon horse-flesh, cats, dogs, rats, old shoes, anything !"

" And when these delicacies fail, what will ye do next ?" asked Roger, sarcastically.

" Starve !" vociferated de Brézé," or rather, we will first turn cannibals, and feed on the carcasses of the high-stomached Islanders, whom neither dungeon discipline, torture, nor threats, have taught obedience to my will !"

" Then I dare be sworn ye will regret master

Tant-perd, Tant-paie, who, after flaying and scorching, ye threw to the fishes! He was the best conditioned amongst them, and would have furnished a meal for a couple of days for ten or twelve of us!" and le Boutillier laughed loud at his own brutal wit.

"*Tant-perd—tant-paie!*—who the devil is he! so many rascally rebels have met the fate they deserved, that I can't recollect any one in particular!"

"Nevertheless, ye have good reason to remember the fat pilot, sir knight, seeing that he was somewhat more rebellious than the rest, and met with a more novel punishment!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed de Brézé—"he who refused to pilot our ships to Gros-nez; whom we sliced, and leisurely roasted by a bonfire, and basted with pitch to make him savoury for old Neptune! Ha! ha! ha!—I wonder his Godship has not since returned us thanks for so rich a treat!"—

"Ha! ha! ha!" echoed Roger "your

knightship never uttered a better piece of wit, I dare be sworn! Ha! ha! ha!”—Further pleasantry was interrupted by a corporal, who came up to say that sails were in sight, in the quarter from whence they were expected.

“Sails in sight! and from the quarter we look for them!” repeated de Brézé, with exultation, “I said Louis was too cunning to let slip such advantage! There, knave, there’s a guerdon for the best piece of news it was ever thy good fortune to carry!” and as he spoke he threw a silver coin on the ground, then turning to Roger, he continued in the same exulting tone, “Good Master Bailli, an ye list, ye may tomorrow serve thy portly friend, the knight, as we served the fat *Tant-perd, Tant-paie!*”

“With all my heart,” responded Roger, “and old Neptune will owe me an obligation in my turn!” and both laughing loudly, gained the side of the sentinel who had been so prompt in espying the ships, and sending the information.

The worthy pair glanced eagerly in the direction pointed out, and there, by the pale moon-beams, they beheld four large ships, evidently coming from the coast of France. De Brézé sent up an exulting shout, which met with a ready echo from Roger and the sentinel. The ships were not more than seven miles off, but there was scarcely any wind and the tide being contrary, they made little progress. De Brézé, however, kept his eyes fixed on them, as though he thought he could, by watching, expedite their movements. At length, to his great mortification, the sails were reefed, and every disposition was manifested to lay to for the night.

Meanwhile, the young moon, which had been gradually disappearing, retired to rest; and a few pale stars only twinkled in the dark canopy above their heads, so that the sight on which his eyes had so triumphantly feasted, was now entirely shut out, and de Brézé, half in vexation, half in jest, said, "They have tucked up for the

night, so good luck to them, say I! we will even follow their example, Roger, and bestir ourselves at day-break; the tide is now on the change, and they lie off at too great a distance to send out pilots:—"Messire Pigot," turning to the officer on duty, who had joined them on the rampart, "see that a party be dispatched in proper time to prepare a lugger to take me and the pilot out to these new comers!"* The officer

* The coast, around the Channel Islands, offers, at low tide, a most terrific aspect. It appears to be a mass of blackened rocks, interspersed with lakes of larger and smaller magnitude, through which it would appear utter madness to attempt to steer. Consequently, no vessels ever enter the Roads without an experienced pilot. In speaking of the coast of Jersey, HENRY D. INGLIS, in his able work called the 'CHANNEL ISLANDS,' says in his description of the parish of Gorey in which the Fortress of Mount Orgueil stands,—“It is worth one's while to make a circuit by the sea-shore, which presents at low water an aspect of singular ruggedness and desolation. Look over the sea at high water, and a few points of dark rocks are seen rising above the surface; as the tide falls, these increase in number and magnitude, till, at low water, the whole of this part of the coast, extending for four or five miles, and at least two

bowed, and de Brézé, followed by the exulting Roger, retired to get a couple of hours' sleep, whilst the latter shut himself up in his dormitory, and with the aid of a bottle of stout Rhenish, prepared to pass the remainder of the night, if not in merry company, at least with merry thoughts.

Scarce three hours had been allowed him for the indulgence of his bright anticipations, when he was suddenly aroused from it by a strange commotion throughout the Castle,—he opened his door, and a loud reiterated exclamation burst upon his ear.

“Our ships be on fire! our ships be on fire!”
Roger flew, rather than ran to the rampart; de

miles below high water-mark, is covered by a terrific congregation of rocks of all forms and dimensions, and of various heights, forming a barrier much more effectual than any that art could raise for the defence of the Island. - - -

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These, independently of the direct dangers that arise from them, produce a multitude of conflicting currents, which, joined to the great force of the tide, render the navigation of the shores of Jersey both difficult and hazardous.”

Brézé was already there. The moon had gone down, and deep darkness was around them, save where lay the Escorceurs' ships; and there, a lurid glare was seen shooting up into the sky, gradually spreading wider and wider. Of a sudden the truth flashed across de Brézé's mind, and with the rage and wildness of a madman he exclaimed,

“Hell and confusion! Those ships which anchored not three hours ago are enemies! To arms! To arms, my men! They must not make good a landing!”

Bewildering was the bustle and confusion which followed. To the clatter of arms,—the shouts of officers,—the loud curses of de Brézé, was ever and anon added the roar of culverins and falconets, which he had ordered to be discharged for the purpose of convincing the Islanders, his vigilance slept not.

A few faint streaks were just visible in the east, as the drawbridge was lowered, and the Escorceurs poured out. Scarcely had four score

of them passed, ere a discharge of small fire arms was heard, and a cry which rent the air,

“King Edward! King Edward! St. Ouen and our charter!” Then came the groans of the wounded and dying, as, one after the other, the stout troops of de Brézé were levelled with the dust!

Those in the rear fell back into the fortress; the drawbridge was again raised, and a moment of silence and confusion followed. The men, hanging their heads, listened sullenly to the bitter taunts of their leader, yet not one shewed an inclination to face the foe anew. Many murmured that they could not fight whilst witchcraft was employed against them, and that they had distinctly seen the witch,—thus they termed *la Blanche Vêtue*, who had inspired them with such terror on the Monte de la Ville. De Brézé heard these murmurs with deep, concentrated rage; his spirit burned with indignation to think that his reckless soldiery, whom neither danger

nor difficulty had ever till then daunted, should quail beneath the supposed magical power of an old, crazy woman, such as le Boutillier represented la Blanche to be. He taunted them with their present pusillanimity, and reminded them of their former bold exploits ;—but it was all to no purpose ; he saw that his harangue failed of producing the slightest effect, and that nothing was to be gained whilst the minds of his followers were under the influence of superstition. Inwardly vowing that one of his first acts of authority should be to seize la Blanche Vêtue, and burn her alive as a witch, he contented himself with ordering them to keep under arms, and with diminishing their rations.

His own feelings were wound up to the very acme of uncertainty, wrath, and disappointment, and he paced furiously to and fro on the rampart, with the mortifying spectacle of his blazing ships before his eyes. The unfortunate men who were on board, perhaps at that very moment expiring in the flames, or struggling for life, with a

little less formidable element, claimed no regret, no passing thought in his hard turbulent heart.

At length the morning dawned; its soft dewy light stole over the dark face of the waters; the sun raised his golden head above the verge of the horizon, where sky and ocean seemed to mingle. The grey misty clouds unrolled themselves like a scroll, and, at each circling fold, revealed a canopy of blue, such as would shame the purest turquoise. As the little dim stars one after another disappeared from the vast expanse of the heavens, so did the blackened hulks of de Brézé's ships, one after another, disappear from the mighty bosom of the sea, on which rode triumphantly, full in view, and with the standard of England proudly floating, the ships of Admiral Sir Richard Harleston! whilst on the plain, in front of the Castle, was seen camped, Sir Phillip de Carteret, and his brave Islanders.

“May I ask, what it is your intention to do now, Sir Pierre de Brézé?” calmly asked an unmoved spectator of the disastrous scene.

“Do?” shouted de Brézé, gnashing his teeth, “do that which your tender mercy for these Islanders will not relish, Sir Julien de Montessy, hold out whilst a spark of life is within me, and when succour comes at last,—as come it must,—wreak a vengeance on these cunning knaves, that shall stand apart in the chronicles of the age, as a thing to pause and marvel at! And you, Sir Julien, what mean you to do?” he continued, changing his tone from rage to bitter irony, “Methinks I can answer for you! better seek new friends that be in prosperity, than stay to starve with old ones that be in adversity! Sir Julien, the drawbridge shall be lowered to give you egress whenever you command!”

“Sir Pierre,” replied the young cavalier calmly, “I have thus long tarried with you for my own pleasure, and though I never have, and

never will take part in your illegal warfare, it is not now, that death and famine stare you in the face, that I should choose to take my departure, —as a soldier and a man I have learnt to face both without shrinking.”

“Thou art thy father’s son!—a true de Montessy after all!” exclaimed de Brézé, slapping him on the shoulder, “but for the squeamish scruples of conscience with which thou art at times troubled, thou mightest become one of the first generals in France! Right glad am I to hear thy decision, for thou wilt aid me with thy counsel, though thou wilt not with thy arm,—this cannot revolt thy saintship I trow?”

An expression of disgust, almost of loathing, passed over the placid features of the young cavalier, and he said dryly

“Sir Pierre de Brézé does not require counsel from one so inexperienced and so ill qualified to give it, as Julien de Montessy.”

De Brézé affected not to hear, but hurrying up to Roger le Boutillier, who stood leaning

over the rampart, stupified by the sudden reverse which had succeeded to premature joy, dragged him apart to concert on an expedient which had already sprung up in his fertile brain.

CHAPTER II.

Ere the day, which this eventful morn ushered in, had closed, two individuals landed at St. Aubin's from a small boat, which had been seen to push off from the largest of the English ships lying at anchor off Gory Bay. The eldest of the two, after giving a brief order to the sailors to await his return, passed an arm within that of his companion, and guided by him walked rapidly forwards in the direction of the manor of St. Ouen. He was in person below the middle stature, but his limbs were so muscular and firmly knit as to give indication of the great

bodily strength he still possessed, for he had long passed the meridian of life. His features were pleasing but not handsome; his head was almost bald, and the few spare locks which remained were white as the driven snow. His smile was full of benevolence, and his clear blue eye, undimmed by time, spoke of a mind at once unprejudiced, active, and intelligent.

“In faith, my young friend, I think we shall take them by surprize, as thou sayest,” was his answer in pure English, to some remark of his companion’s, “no less than we have done the rascally de Brézé; though, in this instance, it will be attended with delight, in lieu of dismay! I swear I would have given my spurs to have watched the turn of his countenance when he first saw the flames rising from his vessels! That plan of thine for navigating our ships along the back of the Island, was a right clever one, for, as thou didst reckon, we completely mystified de Brézé, and lying off in the Great Roads as we were, the manœuvre gave us but an hour’s

extra navigation!—but I prithee tell me whence thou hast gained all thy knowledge of geography and acquaintance with charts? I had heard before, what I now see, that thine Isle was a favoured spot, where nature exhibited her sweetest charms, and in truth a very paradise it is, but I never heard that letters or the arts flourished in like proportion?”

“Nor in truth do they, Sir Richard, we be but a plain simple race,—half military, half civilian,—sons following in the steps of their fathers, neither seeking to be wiser nor richer than they; one portion engaged in their agricultural pursuits without envy or ambition, the other, gaining a hard-earned livelihood from the exhaustless sea, without wishing for any better; exchanging their fishing-rods and plough-shares for the arquebuse and the sword, when their lives be threatened, and resuming their humble avocations with renewed contentment when the danger be passed. If I possess a small portion of knowledge beyond their every day lore, I owe

it to a most dear and highly prized friend, one too, whom thy fair daughter, sir knight, esteemeth scarcely less than myself."

"Ah! my sweet Margery! I marvel if she will be as overjoyed as wont at the sight of her old father, now that she hath placed some one in competition with him in her little heart! Well, well, youngster, I must not let the yellow fever get hold of me! but sith thou hast contrived to possess thyself of the best treasure that can fall to the lot of man, I hope thou wilt know how to use it properly."

"I should be worse than a monster, did I not cherish it more than life."

"Right, boy, right!" replied Admiral Harleston, with a placid smile, "trust me, Edward St. Ouen, that neither wealth nor titles can be put in competition with the happiness of possessing the faithful heart of a loving wife!" The old Admiral brushed a tear from his eye, and continued, "Thou wilt not play truant, as her old father hath done, Edward! To tell

truth, since old age hath been creeping over me, a wish has sometimes risen to renounce active life, and sit me down quietly beside my affectionate child; she hath often implored me to do so,—say, wouldst thou give a seat in thy chimney corner to a weather-beaten old fellow, half sailor, half courtier?”

“Right gladly, honoured sir!” exclaimed Edward, with energy, “the father of my beloved Margaret would ever be a most welcome occupant of our hearth.”

“I believe thee, St. Ouen, from my heart I believe thee. I am much given to read the characters of my fellow men; the face is my index and seldom hath it deceived me—so would I now vouch for thy truth and worth as fearlessly as I would for her’s. Thou hast long had my good wishes boy, and shall not have to ask a second time for my blessing.” Edward was no less sincere than energetic in his acknowledgments, and still conversing on the same pleasing theme, they arrived at the manor.

Young St. Ouen conducted the Admiral into the hall, without sending previous intimation of his arrival, he wished to enjoy the surprise and delight of the happy Margaret, but in this he was in some measure disappointed,—she was not there—a graceful figure bent over an embroidery frame near the window, she looked up and betrayed the sad face of Jacqueline, who came forward smiling to receive the cordial kiss which the old Admiral imprinted on her pale brow, then throwing her arm round her cousin's neck, welcomed him back with the tender affection of a sister. A joyous voice and a fairy step were soon heard, and Margaret, rosy and smiling as the morn, came bounding in.

“Where is he? I am sure I heard him speak! my dear, dear father!” and fondly though hurriedly returned the pressure of Edward's hand, for he had seized her's, she sprung into the arms extended to receive her, with a wild impetuous joy that brought tears to the good knight's eyes.

Seated on her father's knee, with both arms

entwining his neck, one moment bestowing her warm kisses on his weather-beaten cheeks, the next on the thin silvery locks that besprinkled his brow, Margaret could see or think of no one else, and Edward, half jealous of those warmly lavished kisses, stood apart with Jacqueline in the recess of the window, endeavouring to satisfy her curiosity, without infringing the solemn oath la Blanche had imposed upon him. We will follow them through part of their conversation, leaving the happy Margaret to exhaust the almost infantine caresses and affectionate nothings, which, though they delighted her doating father might raise a smile at her expense.

“I beseech thee tell me, Edward, how thou didst arrive at Guernsey?” enquired Jacqueline.

“I have never arrived there at all, sweet coz,” he replied with a provoking air of mystery, “I did but stretch forth my wizard’s wand, and—”

“*Bêtisse!* prithee do not seek to mystify me, but answer seriously.”

“Well, seriously, fair mistress Jacqueline, I

have not touched at the sister Isle, but progressed straight to the fleet, which was laying at anchor in the Great Russel. One hour later and all would have failed, the ships were preparing to set sail."

"Holy Virgin! what a mercy!—but tell me Edward, how didst thou journey?—who were thy companions?"

"Journey!—why strangely enough. La Blanche set me astride on her broom-stick, and conducted by one of her imps, I travelled through the air."

"Out upon thee, cousin; do be serious if thou canst, and answer from whence didst thou embark? and what sort of ship didst thou go in? was it French or English?"

"On all of which subjects thou art as much informed as myself, Jacqueline."

"How?"

"For the simple reason, that though I did of a certainty progress in a vessel, conducted, to the best of my knowledge, as vessels usually

are, by mariners, I can give thee no description of either, seeing that mine eyes were bandaged before I entered, as well as when I left it."

"Well, but the Admiral could have told thee ! he must have seen the ship !"

"There thou art wrong again ; I was lifted into a boat, and conducted by two men alongside the fleet. The moment I was hauled on deck of the Admiral's ship, they rowed back to their own vessel, which, if I err not, lay to within a short distance, sheltered by the projecting point of the Isle of Sark."

"How strange ! but thou must be able to guess from what place thou didst embark, and whether thy sea companions were French or English." Edward smiled at her pertinacity.

"I believe I may, without perjuring myself, or incensing la Blanche, say, I guess I embarked somewhere or another about La Hougue, but as to whether my companions were French or English, men or goblins, I can't say, for I neither saw their faces nor heard their voices

I had all my instructions from la Blanche before I embarked, and on receiving the silent intimation agreed on, I hailed the Admiral, who was not long in recognizing my voice, and readily admitted me on board,—this much I can with certainty say, Jacqueline, La Blanche Vêtue is no common woman !”

“ But the Admiral must have seen the men who were in the boat with thee, even if thou couldst not,” again argued Jacqueline.

“ He saw them as well as men, or anything can be seen at night, when the moon is gone down, and the stars be few.”

“ Then it will always be a mystery.”

“ Always, unless la Blanche decrees to the contrary.”

“ La Blanche !—ah Edward, I would that we owed this service to any other than her !—I like not these mysteries ; heaven hath never favored the dealers or participators in them ! ”

Edward smiled quietly ; he suspected that the mystery was less connected with witchcraft,

than with the dark dealings of dishonest men, and spite of all the arts employed to mystify and mislead him, he shrewdly suspected that he had been conducted through numerous subterranean passages, which opened out into some small creek at the very extreme verge of the Island, and then placed on board a privateer—but this surmise, the nature of the solemn oath he had taken, did not leave him at liberty to communicate. On following *la Blanche*, after quitting *d'Anneville*, he was conducted by her to a stone, called the devil's table, upon which, after some mystical manœuvres, which it would be tedious to relate, she placed a printed copy of the Bible, and stating all the points on which he was to observe secrecy, made him take it in his hands, and swear by its holy contents, and his hope of salvation, that he would never reveal aught that then transpired, nor aught that he surmised. Edward took the oath without hesitation. Scarcely had he done so, when he was suddenly blindfolded by some one, who unperceived by

him, had stationed themselves behind. The same wild unnatural laugh that had before startled his ear came from the cave ; he was then led to some distance ; a rude chorus, or chaunt in some language unknown to him, was struck up, and the air became laden with a fragrance not unlike that produced by the burning of incense at the Romish high mass. After being made to describe a circle four or five successive times, he was conducted another short distance, then gradually lowered a considerable depth, till, as he judged from the change in the atmosphere, he stood in some deep subterranean passage along which he was cautiously led, sometimes diverging to the right sometimes to the left. At length, after hearing the roaring of the sea for some minutes distinctly, he found himself once more in the open air, and felt the tide rushing up to his very feet, he was next placed in a boat, and after expecting every moment to be carried away by the angry surge which swept round him, and wondering whether his traversée

was to be made in the nut shell which seemed to quiver as though it would split asunder, at each fresh wave, he was not a little pleased to find himself, after ten minutes rowing, hauled on board a vessel of whose appearance or even size, he was not able to judge. His position on deck was assigned him by a pair of athletic arms, nor was he left at liberty to change it. Not a word was spoken ; he could hear the tramp of feet, the uncoiling of cable, the flapping of sails, the creaking of masts, and, but for these sounds, he might have believed all to have been the effect of magic ! Edward was passing all these things again in review, when Jacqueline, awaking from the speculation in which she had been indulging, suddenly asked,

“ And what said the Admiral to all this mystery ? ”

“ Nothing, because he knew of none ;—Jacqueline, I would rather lose mine head, than bring evil upon la Blanche Vêtue, be she in league with sinful men of this world, or sinful

spirits of another, and the less that be said about this matter the better !”

“ True, true, Edward, it would be unjust and ungenerous to give her cause to repent her interference on our behalf. I will not even tease thee with other questionings respecting her, but ask for information about that, which nor seeks nor deserves to be kept in secrecy,—how didst thou so cleverly surprise the enemies’ ships ?”

“ By navigating round the back of our Isle, so as to have the appearance of coming from the coast of Normandy instead of England, and then boldly anchoring in sight of the Fortress, to await the turn of tide, and,”—

“ And what then ?” eagerly asked Jacqueline, Edward’s truant eyes and thoughts having wandered to Margaret.

“ What then ?” repeated Edward, “ why, we lay too till the moon went down, and we had dispatched a messenger to my father, when, taking to our boats, we pulled into the harbour,

captured the small craft, and set fire to the ships, without the sleepers on board being disturbed, till they found themselves too hot !”

“Poor wretches !” murmured Jacqueline, “didst thou not save them from their horrid fate ?” This question was also asked a second time ; the youth was no longer near,—a beckon from Margaret had brought him to her side. Jacqueline looked up from her embroidery, and saw the Admiral placing the hand of his smiling daughter, in that of the happy Edward, to whom he solemnly and affectionately betrothed her.

CHAPTER III.

A fortnight had elapsed, but still the Admiral's ships, and Sir Phillip de Carteret's stout band might be seen in the same position, and the beleaguered Fortress, still holding out,—the only difference perceptible was, in the cheerful bustle that pervaded the Island. Women and boys were again employed in the fields, and in guarding their flocks and cattle, driving them for pasturage into the very vicinity of Mount Orgueil. The fishermen also, occasionally betook themselves to their calling. The depeopled parishes once more sent forth a cheerful hum of voices,

and wreaths of smoke again curled above the roofs, which had for so many months been desolate. All spoke perfect security, and more than usual joy.

The besieged, on their part, betokened neither despondency nor lack of activity, and to the great amusement of the beseigers, some forty or fifty men were daily seen, from day break till night fall, labouring most assiduously in the construction of a large boat, accompanying each stroke of the hammer with the refrain of some old ballad, as if anxious to attract the notice of their enemies, which it was impossible to avoid doing, from the conspicuous site they had selected for their work ; though had they chosen a more remote one, the far echoing strokes of the hammer and the hatchet, and the monotonous, grating sound of the saw, would have equally betrayed their employment, and subjected them to the same vigilance. Yet, the bravado conveyed in this utter contempt of concealment, only obtained a smile of ridicule from

the spectators for whom it was intended. The knight jocosely remarked, that they were merely making a noise and shaping a toy, by way of varying the monotony of their existence.

Meanwhile, the Admiral had sent dispatches to King Edward, with a detailed account of the whole transaction, and a humble prayer, that the responsibility he had taken upon himself in acting without his royal master's commands, would be pardoned, in consideration of the exigency, which admitted of no delay. To this representation the emissary had brought back a most gracious answer, which set all the worthy Admiral's fears at rest.

The responsibility he had incurred was, in truth, a heavy one; and a more timid mind would have shrunk from it,—neglect of orders, and engaging in an unauthorized and dubious undertaking, were delinquencies which might have been heavily visited. Of this, Sir Richard Harleston was aware; but he had calculated,

and not without reason, on the liberality and good sense of the high spirited young monarch, and depended not less on that of his able counsellor, the Earl of Warwick ; who, he also knew, bore the Islanders much good will, and duly estimated the advantage which accrued to England from the faithful allegiance of their Isle to the British crown.

Thus authorised to continue the seige, Admiral Harleston gave himself up to the enjoyment of the present, with all the zest of a school boy who obtains an unexpected holiday. The more he saw of the family, of which his daughter was soon to become a member, the more deeply he felt inclined to congratulate himself that he had yielded to her wish, in allowing her to visit her friend, Jacqueline Wallis. He had once aspired to a splendid connexion for her, which his wealth and station, to say nothing of her winning loveliness, might have authorized him to expect ; but he now rejoiced that she was destined to pass her days in peaceful seclusion, away from

the allurements and temptations of a court, where there was much to dazzle and delude, but nought to satisfy the genuine aspirations of a virtuous mind. She had preferred happiness to grandeur, and he was too little of the courtier to blame her choice. He had also a secret motive for congratulation in her marriage with the young Islander, and her consequent removal from court, at which, under the auspices of her aunt, the Lady Fitzhugh, she would on her next birthday have been presented. The gallant young king, gifted with much personal beauty, brave as a lion, and excelling in all the manly accomplishments of the age, was an object of universal admiration to the fair dames of England, and his gallantries had already made some *éclat*, when merely Earl of March.

That he had been struck with admiration by Margaret's youthful charms, the Admiral was well aware, and with all his love and respect for his young king, experience taught him to mistrust his code of honour, where the fair sex

were concerned ! To see his daughter the consort of a King of England, was a dazzling elevation to which his ambition had never aspired. To see her the mistress of one, was likewise a possibility that could not be for a moment contemplated. And though he sometimes smiled at his fears, for he had taken alarm merely from the young king having asked him why he kept his fair daughter in such seclusion—yet had they gained sufficient hold on his mind to inspire him with a feeling of gladness, that she had now no chance of being exposed to the dangers which he apprehended.

CHAPTER IV.

Jacqueline alone, amidst the universal contentment, was a prey to poignant grief. Du Bois, the only being who understood her anxiety, or could be of service to her, was still unable to quit the bed, to which he had been brought back a few hours after he made so desperate an effort to escape. He had been discovered in the copse, lying senseless on the ground, and the nag with which he had been accommodated by Nannette, quietly grazing by his side. The mad attempt to venture abroad, was attributed to the effects of the delirium under which he

long after laboured. For a few days, indeed, this faithful servant hung between life and death ; his fever gained so fearful a height, that Jacqueline at one time gave up all hopes of his recovery, which, but for her watchful care, it is probable would never have been effected. Du Bois betokened his consciousness of her attention, by the most humble gratitude and respectful submission. He sometimes found an opportunity to speak of his master, and Jacqueline could not witness the deep anxiety he manifested, without seeking to lessen it, and allay the fever of mind, which evidently retarded his recovery. She again and again assured him that her plans, with regard to Sir Julien, were arranged, but she forbore to mention the ill success which had attended her first effort, or that she awaited but in the hope of making him the medium of a second communication.

Though Jacqueline endeavoured to appear calm, and to entertain no fears on Sir Julien's account, she was nevertheless overwhelmed by

the most cruel perplexity. To appeal to her uncle was now useless ; to get a communication conveyed to the Fortress was impossible ; and, even if this latter object could be accomplished, she feared her entreaties would not now prevail with Sir Julien to abandon his companions. There was but one alternative—to await till return of strength should enable du Bois to aid her with his ready wit and persevering fidelity ; but ere she judged he was capable of exertion, either mental or bodily, he learnt from the loquacity of Petit Jean, that the garrison was reduced to the last extremity, and subsisting upon horse-flesh. Du Bois could endure the seeming passiveness on the part of Jacqueline no longer, and struggling with the debility which threatened to keep him a prisoner some weeks longer, he quitted his bed, and presented himself before her, having taken care to ascertain she was alone.

“ Lady,” he said reproachfully, “ I have come to remind you of a promise which I had

hoped you would not have forgotten—I hear that ghastly famine is stalking through the Fortress! Surely, lady, the time is come for you to interpose and snatch Sir Julien from the horrors of such a scene! Holy Virgin! may it not be even now too late?—he could not eat horse-flesh like a dog or a cannibal! Lady, in God’s name, I ask you what is to be done?”

Jacqueline drew a long, deep breath.

“Du Bois, I have not forgotten. I awaited but thy recovery, to ask assistance in this fearful dilemma—yet, *how* thou art to serve him or what is to be done, heaven alone can tell!—for where is the possibility of getting admitted into the Fortress?”

“Leave that to me lady,” interposed du Bois, “honour me with your instructions, ’tis all I need!”

Jacqueline buried her face in her handkerchief to conceal the varying emotions of her countenance as well as the tell-tale tears which sprung to her eyes. At length she looked up and said sadly:—

“They be but brief—thou wilt convey my earnest entreaty to Sir Julien de Montessy, that he separate from the unworthy band, to which in an evil hour he joined himself, and accompany thee to the manor. Tell him, I will undertake to explain all to my uncle, and ensure him a welcome, till such times as he can return to France. But list, Master du Bois,—thou must swear to be no tale-bearer, but observe the strictest secrecy with regard to what passeth without !”

“Lady, I attest heaven that your commands shall be obeyed. Farewell ! If you see me not again, lady, you will know that my master was beyond reach of this tardy succour.” Jacqueline suppressed an hysterical sob, and motioning him to stay, she wrote a few lines in the hurried manner of one, who would fain have no time allowed for reflection. She folded the parchment, but neither added superscription nor ligature,—and giving it to him, said in a smothered voice,—“Give this to Sir Julien, and I charge thee return hither under all circum-

stances, with what speed thou mayst." Du Bois bowed his head upon his breast, and slowly departed. Turning his steps towards the stable, he procured a fast trotting mule, which he mounted, after taking the precaution to draw the hood of his houpeland close over his face. After making many halts, and often recruiting his failing strength with some powerful cordial he had taken the precaution to bring with him, he arrived at the "Knight and the Dragon," though not till daylight had quite disappeared. Here, having furnished himself with a basket of provisions, for which he remunerated his friend, the host, liberally, he again set off for Mount Orgueil. He was twice summoned to halt by the patrol, but his well-known voice had only to be heard, to enable him to pass on; at length he came within sight of the Fortress, and guided by the lights which glimmered within the narrow casements from the part of the building, which was inhabited by the officers, he descended from his mule, and fastened it by the

bridle to a jut of one of the little ragged mounds of rock, scattered here and there over the sandy common he traversed, and which, in the very heart of luxuriant vegetation, here exhibited all the niggardness of sterility, offering one of the very few instances in this picturesque little Isle, of the striking contrasts, or freaks in nature, so often presented to the eye of the rambler in other countries, which remind the beholder of the disagreeable sensation experienced on traversing the great stage of life, by witnessing the strange alternations presented to the eye—the rude transfer from elegance, luxury, and beauty, to abject poverty, disgusting inattention to cleanliness, and hideous deformity! Who can pass from the carriage-thronged avenues of Hyde Park to the miserable purlieus of St. Giles's, and not shudder at the painful change? Yet, vice and virtue glide through the dazzling throng of the first, as well as through the poverty-stricken crowds of the last, and shall hereafter meet the same punishment, the same reward! Oh! is

not this a warning to the *great* in their splendor?—an encouragement to the *poor* in their misery?—but return we to the faithful du Bois.

Having secured his mule, and possessed himself of his basket, he avoided the plain on which Sir Phillip was encamped, and from which a busy hum still proceeded. He walked for a quarter of a mile in a straight direction, and then diverged into the path la Blanche Vêtue had taken, when, on the landing of the enemy, she thought to arouse the Fortress, by arriving there before them, but instead of ascending the edge of rocks which terminated at the causeway, he there struck off to the left, groping with great difficulty along the base of the rock on which the castle was built. At length, after wearisome and painful exertions, sometimes leaping from crag to crag, at others, wading through the sea, he paused beneath a lower bastion; here he deposited his basket, his object being to deliver it secretly to Sir Julien de Montessy, and having disincumbered himself of his cloak and doublet,

he began to ford his way through the sea, which here cut off his passage from the point he wished to gain. Pursuing his new route, not without an occasional shiver, he soon found himself out of his depth, but nothing daunted, he exerted his remaining strength, and swam some distance till he arrived opposite a battery, where a sentry paced his solitary round. He shouted out at the highest pitch of his voice, and thus attracted the attention of the soldier, whose first impulse was to present his arquebuse as he challenged the swimmer. Du Bois gave the pass-word in as loud a tone as his remaining strength permitted; he then made for the shore, and utterly exhausted clung to the rocks, to prevent himself from being swept out by the receding tide.

After some little delay, an officer appeared on the battery; the adventurer was again questioned, and after much parleying and repeated assurances from Sir Julien de Montessy, that the intruder was his faithful esquire, a rope

ladder was thrown over for him, the officer positively refusing to allow the drawbridge to be lowered.

Wearied with exertion, and his limbs benumbed with cold, it was not without difficulty that du Bois gained the rampart, where his master awaited him, anxiously watching his slow progress.

In somewhat more than an hour, a cautious noise might be heard on the low outer bastion, at the base of which du Bois had deposited his basket and his mantle. A scaling ladder was presently thrown over and some one descended—it was the minstrel himself. His countenance bore traces of suffering and disappointment, no one followed him from the bastion, and having passed his hand once or twice across his brow as though in pain or deep perplexity, he secured the basket to the ladder and gave a signal, when it was instantly raised. He then adjusted the garments he had cast off, and turned slowly away towards the lonely spot where he had left

his mule and where he again found him. Still wrapt in painful and gloomy meditations, he remounted and journeyed back through the same bye-paths, to the "Knight and the Dragon," where he found the ready admittance of one long expected. After a brief conversation with mine host, and a sparing supper, he retired to rest.

CHAPTER V.

It was about the second hour of noon on the following day, that Jacqueline, with head drooping on her bosom, and hands clasped convulsively together, paced up and down one of the paths of the spacious garden at the manor. The minstrel, du Bois, stood in respectful silence watching her movements with deep commiseration. At length, she stepped near, and, once more accosted him.

“Du Bois,” she said, with the look and the tone of acute mental anguish—“du Bois, my soul sickens at the frightful scene of misery

and death thou hast painted ! Didst thou use every argument in thy power to withdraw him from it?—didst thou say it was I who entreated ? ”

“ Yes, lady, I did say all—every thing,” replied the minstrel, who with deep emotion had communicated the ill success of his mission, and the deplorable state of famine to which the besieged Fortress was reduced. “ Sir Julien is thus obdurate, because he thinks his honour concerned—out upon the word ! henceforth I swear to hate it!—thus carried to excess it degenerates into a bug-bear, with which men gratuitously suffer themselves to be tormented, as though there were not enough of real ills in life to give variety to one’s lot ! ”

“ Enough indeed ! ” murmured Jacqueline, “ poor Julien !—is it then my cruel destiny to be the cause of nought but unhappiness and suffering to thee ?—and burying her face in her hands, she yielded to the bitter emotions struggling in her breast. Du Bois continued to gaze

on her with feelings in which satisfaction and pity were strangely mingled.

“At any rate, my dear master doth not love without return,” he said mentally, “I will tell him that she wept, all dignified and self-possessed as she ever is!—yes, she wept and in my presence too! I doubted, till now, that she loved him, as she ought. Well, after all, one might excuse Sir Julien’s infatuation! how could he help loving her!—by the lord, there be something so queenly, so bewitching, in her very grief, that one might be almost tempted to kneel down and pay her homage!” Whilst he thus soliloquized, Jacqueline had drawn her tablets from her pocket, and having written a few lines, she once more addressed du Bois.

“My first billet, thou sayest, never reached Sir Julien?”

The minstrel gave a melancholy affirmative.

“Take this then,” she continued, giving him the piece of parchment on which she had been writing, “it may have more weight with him

than a verbal message ; you will at eve convey it to him, since thou canst so easily obtain admission into the Fortress. If Sir Julien consent not to accompany thee hither, thou wilt tell him that a supply of provisions for himself shall be sent every second night. I know, my good du Bois, I need not ask if thou wilt be the bearer, thou hast ever - - ”

“ The lady Jacqueline hath but to command,” replied the minstrel with a respectful bow, retreating in his usual quiet manner. Jacqueline looked up to ascertain the cause of this sudden departure, and saw Margaret and Edward within a few yards of her.

“ So thou hast speedily brought thy dying patient to life again, sweet coz !” exclaimed Edward, following the minstrel with his eye as he turned down a narrow path, after doffing his cap, “ thy skill in medicine will immortalize thy name, and what with thy piety—for I hear from Margery, thou doest nothing but fast and pray—will, I doubt not, cause thee to be canonized at

thy death—*gloire à notre Isle!*—a saint Héle-rius, and a Saint Jacqueline! Pilgrims will turn their steps hither in preference to Boulogne or the Holy Land. And then, what honour will crown our name! To have produced a Saint is not what every family can boast of.”

“Nor will thine,” interrupted the laughing Margaret; “it it only produce such thoughtless *bavardes* as thyself, Edward;—what sayest thou, dear Jacqueline?”

Jacqueline tried to smile, but in vain; her lips trembled, and she replied she knew not what. Her companions, however, were too happy to take much notice of her abstraction, and Margaret playfully continued,—

“Prithee, let us be serious now, Edward; see how grave our cousin looks. Come, tell us how goes on the siege; hath anything new transpired?”

“Solomon says ‘there be nothing new under the sun,’ and so I verily believe the Escorceurs begin to think, for they continue to amuse them-

selves between starving and building their boat, full in our view, as though they expected us to be so complaisant as to allow them to launch it when it is fit to take a trip to France ; I should scarce have given de Brézé credit for such an *idle* piece of industry. What say ye fair coz ? Margery says she thinks it must be his coffin that de Brézé is getting made, and that when it is finished he means to lay himself down in it and die like a lion in his den—nay, like a fox in his lair,—was it not, sweet Margaret ? ”

Margaret laughed, and Jacqueline with a sigh, said,—

“ God grant, if it be for such a purpose, that it may soon be finished, for the sake of the miserable sufferers whom his wilful obstinacy dooms to starvation, and who will then be released from his tyranny.”

“ True, true, dear Jacqueline. Our exultation may well be damped, when we think of the unfortunate prisoners whom he involves in the ills he has brought upon himself. There ’s the

poor Seigneur of Senmaresq and his family, and not a few others, for whose sakes the Admiral and my father agreed to offer the besieged more favourable terms of capitulation than we had in our over-boiling wrath first decreed them ; namely, to lay down their arms, march out of the Fortress, and embark in the vessels that would be prepared to take them back to France, to chew the cud of their disappointment."

"And will de Brézé not accept these terms think ye, Edward?" eagerly asked Jacqueline.

"Nay ; he hath rejected them with insolent defiance. To list his bravado one would think he expected all France to his aid, and that the Fortress was provisioned for a year at least ; whereas, in his dispatch he stated that he had not stores enough for a week !"

Jacqueline repressed a heavy sigh, but not till it had attracted the notice of her companions.

"Dear Jacqueline," said Margaret, taking her hand and looking with concern in her face, "I am sure thou art ailing of late ; thou art

so changed in appearance, and thou dost so often check a sigh, as though thy breathing did not come freely as wont. I beseech thee not to neglect thy health ; let sister Ann prescribe for thee, she is well skilled in medicine."

"I assure thee, dear Margaret, I am not conscious of any alteration in my health."

"Then thou hast something preying on thy mind, dear cousin," said Edward, looking fixedly at her ; "thou wert not wont to be sad when thy giddy-pated brother was merry, and now that he be a thousand times more happy than he hath ever been, or than he deserveth to be, thy very smile betrays sadness, sweet sister o' mine. I begin to fear I hold a much smaller place in thy affection and confidence than I had hoped and flattered myself I did."

"Do not wrong me by thinking so, my dear Edward ; thou art dear to me as ever brother was to sister ; nor am I insensible to the happiness that Heaven I hope has in store for thee, and of which thou seemest to be sensible ;

but thou must make allowances ; for all be not blessed with the same warm, lively temperament as thyself. Besides, the very excess of thine own joy makes thee view the quiet satisfaction of others with impatience ; yesterday I heard thee tax our sweet Margaret with the grave expression of her brow, whilst at the time a quiet smile was on her lip, which was so true an index of happiness as to inspire it in the beholder.”

“ Well, well,” replied, Edward, “ I am perhaps too exacting ; superfluity of happiness, like superfluity of gold, doth, I have been told, make misers of many ; I fear it hath of me, for I would have a thousand smiles where I get but one ;”—and he pressed the arm, which he had not suffered to escape, close to his side,—“ but truly, Jacqueline, thou art grown somewhat too much of the philosopher. There be that about thee which makes one feel a *je ne sais quoi* of reverence mingle with one’s affection, and I often ask myself if it be possible thou art the

same little rosy, roguish playmate whom I used to scold and kiss in turn."

"Mayhap thy scoldings outbalanced thy kisses, Edward," said Jacqueline, with an affectionate smile, "so now I in revenge, being a year or so thy senior, turn the tables upon thee, and scold and reprove whenever a little opportunity chances."

"Nay ; thou art, and hast ever been, all kindness, all indulgence to me, sweet coz," resumed Edward, placing her hand within his arm, and slowly proceeding along the broad garden path where they had hitherto stood conversing ; "'tis not thy asperity, but thy high excellence to which I made allusion, which places thee far above thy sex in general,"—and here a second pressure of the arm of his other fair companion was meant to convey an assurance, that *she*, nevertheless, ranked foremost : "aye, and ours too, for the matter o' that. I know but of one who can rank with thee in intellect, or whose mind and pursuits could at all suit thine, or

who is, in short, worthy of thee,—that one is Julien ” Jacqueline started so abruptly, that Edward interrupted himself. “ Jacqueline, what ails thee? What made thee start so nervously?”

“ Nothing, nothing; a mere spasm: I am subject to it—pray proceed. It was quite *mal à propos* to interrupt thy eulogium at such an interesting climax; I must not lose the remainder.”

Margaret looked anxiously at her friend, then at her lover: the latter proceeded.

“ I was going to say that my friend Julien d’Anneville is the only man worthy of *thee*, and thou art the only woman I know worthy of *him*. Upon this conviction, be it known unto thee, Mistress Jacqueline, that I have set my mind upon seeing thee his wife, and that I mean to set about planning and plotting to bring the matter to a conclusion, somewhat after the fashion of Dame Mèlèche, who has passed a whole year (so say the gossips) in laying

snares for the heart of my poor friend, which has nevertheless, contrived to escape being made captive by the charms of the fair Seraphine, whom, report saith, hath somewhat prematurely and willingly surrendered her own. Be that as it may, I care not, so the gaunt, blowsy demoiselle doth not become thief in her turn, and mar my project; for, in good truth, Jacqueline, I would give half mine estate to see thee the wife of Julien d'Anneville."

"And much would it rejoice me, too!" exclaimed Margaret, with a beaming face. "He is so good, so clever, so true a friend. Dearest Jacqueline, how happy it would make us all!"

She to whom this was addressed smiled quietly as she said: "You have so much to make you happy without the aid of the flattering scheme you have laid for me, that I shall not hesitate to set all your anticipations at rest, by declaring that your wish is as impossible in its accomplishment, as the hearts be kind that formed it, and, if I mistake not, the Seigneur of

Anneville, were his consulted, would convince you that neither his happiness nor mine would be insured by the fulfilment of your wishes."

"That were impossible," replied Edward, warmly, "with a mind so exalted, a nature so truly noble,—a heart so capable of affection, d'Anneville could not fail of securing the happiness of the woman he married. And thou, Jacqueline, who could live beneath the same roof with thee and daily note all thy rare excellencies, without loving thee with heart and soul?—it were not possible! I tell thee, that thou and Julien d'Anneville were formed for each other."

"I grant thee, Edward, thy friend is all that thou sayest, but the heart is a wayward, incomprehensible thing. I am not the only one who hath admired and esteemed, yet could not love him; and though thou in thy partiality may think me capable of awakening his affection, I am as well convinced that he could never love *me*, as I am that I could never love *him*."

Margaret blushed deeply as her friend made

allusion to d'Annevilles's former attachment to her, yet on Edward it produced no effect, and he rejoined.

“ But thou wilt love him when I tell thee of another generous proof of friendship, nay of more, of brotherly affection he has lately given me. But I will narrate all this to thee as we progress together towards Mont Orgueil, for, be it known to thee, dear Jacqueline, I have ordered thine and Margery's palfreys to be brought round without asking thy consent to our plan, because I knew that when there was question of happiness to those thou lovest thou hast never a dissentient voice ; so I am about to escort ye to our rude camp, where ye will find a welcome from the Admiral who is ashore ; Margery is ready to weep because she has not seen him for two days, and moreover she cannot sleep at night, so great is her anxiety to behold the marine coffin of de Brézé. Say, sweet coz, thou wilt not be the cause of a double disappointment to her ? ”

“Certainly not,” replied Jacqueline, with forced cheerfulness, but with a heavy heart, for she felt that in her present state of mind, solitude would have been a luxury.

We have already said, selfishness formed no part of Jacqueline’s character, thus, she prepared for the excursion with an alacrity that evinced no sort of distaste to it, and was ready to mount her palfrey even some minutes before Margaret, who, with a little very pardonable coquetry lingered longer than wont over her toilet.

As the young party rode briskly over the heights of St. Brelades, whose glittering quarries of granite, by the way, supply the stone used in the construction of the new houses of Parliament---their attention was directed by the attendant to the sea, where they beheld two of the Admiral’s ships rounding Pleimont Point, the largest of which, towed along a sloop, evidently a captured enemy—at least, such Edward, after an attentive scrutiny, pronounced to

be his opinion, and, having requested his fair companions to return with the domestic to the manor, he galloped off to St. Helerius to learn what had transpired. Jacqueline and Margaret drew up their palfreys close to the brink of the height, and watched the progress of the ships till they entered the harbour, and then they rode homewards.

It might be about five hours afterwards, that a vast crowd of persons and a strong body of horsemen, guarding some eighteen or twenty prisoners, passed the same spot on their way to the castle. They were evidently sea-farers, but their dress, appearance, and gestures were so wild and uncouth, that they looked like natives of some uncivilized region. Their jackets and caps were rudely fashioned out of the skins of various animals, with little attention to the assortment of quality and colour in the same garment. Their beards were unshaven; their hair, long and matted, clung round their bare muscular necks, and their broad, sinewy feet were

divested of shoes and stockings, and, indeed, seemed totally unaccustomed to any such luxury.

The intense curiosity with which the crowd pressed around to get a sight of them, roused their wrath and indignation almost to a pitch of fury. They clenched their fists, gnashed their teeth, and flung their arms about them with frantic gestures. At length they made a stand, as if preparing for a struggle to free themselves. The horsemen reined up in a more compact body on either side, and lowered their arms as if in readiness to charge, and in this manner the remainder of the march was performed to Gros-nez, where the prisoners were consigned to the subterranean dungeons, and the mob dispersed.

Edward, who took command of the party from the town, then set off for the manor, to communicate to Margaret and his cousin the particulars of the capture which two of the Admiral's ships had made during the night of a pirate vessel, the one they had seen towed into the harbour.

CHAPTER VI.

THROUGH a dense crowd whom curiosity had attracted from all parts of the Island to Grosnez, in the hope of getting admitted to hear the trial of the Pirates, Sir Phillip made his way, accompanied by the Bailli and twelve Jurats in their official robes. On entering the dismal chamber wherein "*les cours d'assis*" were now holden they found the *Procureur du Roi*, the King's Advocate, the Viscomte, the twelve Constables, and the six Advocates of the Court, already assembled.* The body of the hall was crowded

* The whole legislative body is composed of thirty-six members, including the rector of the twelve parishes, nominated by the governor, and the twelve constables elected by the people. The King's Officers and the Viscomte have seats, may speak, but cannot vote.

to suffocation, and some forty halberdiers lined the entrance, or were ranged behind the sort of raised platform on which the prisoners were to take their place—an unusual circumstance, which plainly denoted of how desperate a character the pirates were deemed. The gentlemen of the court having taken their seats, the prisoners were introduced, and the appearance of so many athletic, ferocious-looking beings fully justified the unwonted precautions which had been taken.

The President, or Bailli, then rose, and with a dignified air of magisterial importance, thus addressed the prisoners :

“ Ye stand here before us, the worshipful the Captain of this Isle, the Crown Officers of England, the Bailli, Jurats, Constables, Advocates, and Viscomte—to answer to the charge of being pirates upon the high seas ; and I now call upon the captain or commander, if present, to stand forth, and give an account of himself.”

Upon this, one of the party, who seemed most advanced in years, and to have most claim

to respectability, or rather humanity, in his appearance, moved a few paces forward with a proud bearing, which indicated scornful defiance and a total absence of respect.

“ So ye are the leader of this ferocious crew !
I pray of ye, what may be your name ? ”

“ Name ! I have none—it hath been effaced from the records by the bloody deeds of the Church which registered it ! ”

A murmur of horror passed through the chamber. “ A heretic ! ” shouted some ; “ A heathen ! ” shouted others. When this burst of indignation subsided, the Bailli resumed,—

“ Then, I pray thee, Sir Nameless, what may be your country and your calling ? ”

“ My country is the free—the unfettered by man’s tyranny—the boundless sea ! My calling, to wage war and death on they who wrought death and desolation to me and mine.”

The Bailli seemed staggered by the fearless boldness, the wild enthusiasm of the speaker ; and whilst the Viscomte noted down these sin-

gular responses, the King's advocate rose and said—

“Gentlemen of the Court, this style of response seemeth to me altogether irrelevant, and used as a mere subterfuge by the prisoner to conceal his real name and lawless career; were it not better to bind him to speak the truth upon the blessed cross?”

The old man cast a fiery look of scorn upon the Crown Officer, and when the crucifix was presented to him, he took it deliberately, brake it in two, and, presenting the fragments, said:—

“I counsel ye to dispatch this broken bauble of superstition to that servant of the devil—him ye call Pope—tell him that ere long thus shall his mitre his —” The uproar became so tremendous, that the voice of the speaker was drowned.

“Blasphemy!—to the stake with him!—to the torture!” resounded from every side, and the halberdiers, as if yielding to the general impulse, seized rudely hold of the culprit—but

Sir Phillip de Carteret, rising in his turn, succeeded in imposing silence ; and calmed down the angry feelings of the assembly, by observing that the prisoner was evidently a lunatic, urging the propriety of not questioning him further until his companions had been sworn and examined. In accordance with this suggestion, the prisoners were successively called on to kiss the cross. By some, the appeal was treated with coarse ribaldry—by others with silent contempt ; nor was it in a single instance complied with. A profound silence was observed by the assembly—there remained but one other to be submitted to the ordeal, and all eyes were eagerly fixed on him. He differed much from his companions, both as regarded strength and proportion of limb, and manner of attire—his features, instead of being weather-beaten, bronzed and daring, betrayed the contraction, the ghastly palor of sickness, and wore an expression of restless grief and deep thought. When the crucifix was presented to him, his

sunken grey eye kindled with the bright, wild fire of fanaticism—he took it, and holding it at a distance from him, said contemptuously,

“Lo! what is this but the work of man’s hands, before which your false teachers in opposition to the voice of God, bid ye,—fools and blind as ye are, bow the knee. Perish thus the cunning devices of Anti-Christ”—throwing the cross upon the ground—“and thus be crushed the great Babylonish—” but he proceeded no further—for, as he, in his mad fanaticism, raised his foot to stamp on the holy emblem, he was violently pulled backwards and buffeted right and left, with a fury that seemed to threaten the dislocation of his spare, loosely hung limbs. His companions, who during the uproar had dexterously disentangled their hands from their fetters, with a yell, savage and startling as that of the wild Indian, fell upon the halberdiers, so unexpectedly, that they were all in one moment disarmed, and their weapons directed against their own breasts—a scene of bloody conflict

and dire confusion ensued—the chamber, already crammed to excess, could not give admittance to the halberdiers stationed in the passage, which was also filled to suffocation, and not until this outlet had been cleared, so as to give a vent for the outrush of the terrified assembly, were they able to co-operate with their disarmed and nearly disabled comrades.

The towering form of the knight, brandishing his dagger, was perceptible in the very midst of the affray; he was for some minutes engaged hand to hand with the leader of the pirates, who proved himself a second Cleomedes. The bailli, and the rest of the legislative body, who, on assuming their robes of office had laid aside even the single weapon of defence so commonly worn at the period, remained on the bench watching the desperate conflict with feelings of no enviable nature. Such of the combatants as were armed, fought like tigers, struggling and stumbling over the prostrate bodies of their dying or disabled comrades: those who were

not armed, struggled man to man as in a pugilistic encounter—the wild yells of the pirates gave a savage character to the strife, adding tenfold to its confusion, and the consternation of those who listened anxiously without. Short as was the time during which it had been carried on, when the reinforcement of halberdiers came to the succour of the Islanders, no less than twenty of their numbers were slain or disabled, whilst only four of their assailants were vanquished: the rest, though in many instances desperately wounded, fought on as ferociously as ever—but the halberdiers closing around them in the rear, soon turned the tide of victory. The pirates were manacled and marched off to their dungeon. Covered with gashes and blood, what little appearance of humanity they had previously borne about them, was completely effaced—they looked like so many wild beasts led off from the arena of Pagan Rome. Alas! how painful is it to contemplate human nature when degraded by violent passion, or grovelling

in low and sickening vice—how sad to see the divine image effaced from the work on which the hand of the Creator deigned to leave the impress of his own essence—immortality—the ennobling stamp which is man’s patent of nobility, of dominion over all other created things! How sad to see the benevolent designs of a mighty architect thus overthrown and wrecked,—to see that man will not take warning by the fall of the first transgressors—that he cannot content himself with plucking from the tree of *good*, to eat thereof and be satisfied, but he must ever turn to the forbidden one of *evil*, with a restless longing after *change* miscalled *knowledge*—or, actuated by the pitiable weakness that spurns control, dreads ridicule, and cannot resist the force of example, not less than by the paltry pride which courts temptation and defies the still, small voice of conscience. “Why, he is ready to exclaim, “Why should the tree of evil have been in the first instance planted, if the tree of good alone sufficed to the happiness

and well being of the newly created race?" Nay, but oh! man, who art thou that enquirest of the Almighty? Say, ye earthly kings and rulers, do ye not establish rules and issue forth laws and edicts, and do ye not impose pains and penalties on the rebellious subject who disobeys them? And ye, ye rich!—men in authority, having many under ye, to whom ye say,—‘do this, and it is done!’ do ye not think yourselves justified in laying down rules for the conduct of, and exacting duties from your dependents? and when called on to inflict punishment for the non-observance of these rules and duties, do ye expect to be accused of injustice and tyranny? Nay then, if the princes and rulers of the earth enjoy undisputed the privilege of framing laws, imposing commands, punishing disobedience, and rewarding fidelity—shall we dare wish to limit the power of the King of Kings—shall we dare question His justice and beneficence! but we will not further pursue the train of reflection in which de Car-

teret indulged, as he contemplated the sickening spectacle the scene of conflict presented, and superintended the removal of the wounded and the dressing of their wounds—this being done, he rejoined the still stupified jury, who awaited his presence to decide on the steps necessary to be taken with regard to the prisoners. After a lengthened debate, it was unanimously agreed, that the matter should be brought under the cognizance of the Church, and that the stake was a more fitting expiation for the enormities of the pirates than the gallows. Sir Phillip having agreed to convene a court, lay and ecclesiastical, on the morrow, the parties dispersed to their homes, for the shades of night were fast gathering round their rock-girt Isle. We will tarry at Gros-nez, where the sixteen survivors of the desperate crew who had wrought so much death and confusion, were confined in the strongest of the subterranean dungeons ; having quaffed copious draughts from the pitcher of water, which, together with a coarse loaf, had

been supplied by the jailor, they now stretched themselves on their mouldy pallets, and without exchanging a single sentence with each other, sunk into a profound slumber. The warder, accompanied by the turnkey, entered the cell about ten o'clock and seeing that the prisoners slept soundly, retired without arousing them. The former observing to his companion as he took the ponderous keys of the cell, "that unless the evil one came to their aid, to break through the massive door so carefully secured, and to knock off the double fetters with which the prisoners' limbs had been bound, they would, he hoped, ere many more nights passed over them, be kept awake by scorching flames, either in this world or the next, as all heretics and heathens deserved to be!" The turnkey answered with a pious 'amen' and devoutly crossing his breast followed his superior to a more habitable part of the castle, where each sought his dormitory.

The warder having regaled himself with a

flagon of wine, which produced a very agreeable sort of drowsiness, threw off his clothes, and depositing his bunch of keys under the mattress, stretched himself on his pallet with a feeling of satisfaction that his duties were over. He was fast yielding himself up to the sweet influence of the drowsy god, when all of a sudden, a bright blue flame shot through the darkness of his chamber, and played fantastically around his bed: at the same moment, he heard his name pronounced in a sepulchral voice. He started up, and looked around with superstitious terror. A fresh volume of variegated light darted across his eyes, blinding them with its vividness, whilst the same hollow voice repeated,---“ Repent, repent---for thou wilt shortly have to give an account of the misdeeds committed in the flesh!” The warder fell back absolutely powerless! his teeth chattering audibly, and large drops of perspiration trickling coldly from his brow---“ Repent,” repeated the voice still nearer---“ Repent ”---the hand of death is on

thee !” At the same moment he felt the icy touch of a large attenuated hand on his brow---he uttered a deep groan and consciousness forsook him. The phosphoric flame which filled the narrow dormitory died away, and for a moment all was darkness and silence---then there came a faint gleam of light, falling full on the ghastly features of the unconscious official, evidently proceeding from a dark lanthorn---a tall form was next seen groping about in every direction, as if making a minute but unsuccessful search. At length, a low gurgling laugh was heard, accompanied by the clinking of keys, ---La Blanche---it can scarce be necessary to say *she* was the mysterious visitant, had discovered their hiding place, and triumphantly bore them off; securing the door of the chamber on the outside. With a noiseless, rapid tread, she glided down the narrow staircase and through the many winding underground passages which led to the dungeon where the pirates were incarcerated---undoing the bolts and lock with

the greatest ease and celerity, she entered the cell and gradually surveying the sleepers, told over their numbers. "The pastor and five others missing" she exclaimed, "but *he*,---*he* is here," and she bent her steps towards the corner, where the elder, and it may be remembered first interrogated of the prisoners was stretched apart from the rest---she laid her hand softly upon his and he instantly awoke --- "La Blanche," he exclaimed without betraying surprise, and with a look which had lost all its ferocity and even approached to kindness.

"I am here to save thee, brother," replied La Blanche---"but why hast thou acted so indiscreetly?---why all this bloodshed?---did I not vouch that if captivity befel thee and thine on this coast, not a hair of your heads should be harmed, so ye but followed my counsel?"

"For the matter o'that, Blanche, I believe we have fallen into the lion's den and provoked the monster too far to escape his jaws! 'Twas an ill-omened day for me, on which I allowed gra-

itude to de Carteret to get the better of my judgment, and brought hither the papers we took from our capture ; we've not had an hour's peace since—and maugre thy reliance on his honour, I'm well given to believe that the young scape-grace we conveyed to the Admiral's fleet, hath not observed his oath. We have been playing hide and seek with two of these very ships ever since, and should have escaped them, but that old Æolus played us a scurvy trick the night before last, and veering suddenly about, prevented our entering the Cove.”

“Enough,” interposed La Blanche, “we must not waste over discoursings of the past, the time that may be profitably employed for the present---thou must arouse thy comrades and follow me.”

“Follow ! and for what ? To exchange one dungeon for another. To drag out a wearisome existence in the wild cave thou 'st made thy refuge, and doubtless intendest we should hence-

forth make our's. Nay, nay, give me a home upon the trackless sea, or give me death!"

"Death!" re-echoed La Blanche: "aye, death hath ever been a remorseless tyrant to thine and mine. Thinkest thou he will now turn friend, and rid us of the burden of existence? We, the *last*, the withered branches of our once goodly tree! Nay, brother, nay; death deals with the smiling treasure of a fond mother's heart; the pride of a father's declining years; the blooming bride; the loving husband, the gentle wife, whom long tried affection and fond endearment have knit so closely in the same being, that the heart, stilled by his cruel shaft, is blessed indeed, compared with the one it wounds and leaves to bleed! For such as thou and me death has no dart: he is too busy with the young, the loving, and the blessed! The tortured frame, the bruised spirit, are no fit victims to awake his malice; all such he leaves to the chill decay of nature. Then follow, brother, follow; thy thread hath not yet spun its length."

“And how am I to follow, deprived as be my limbs of motion, by the inventions of man’s tyranny?”

“I have come provided,” said La Blanche, producing the implements required for releasing him from his fetters. “There, ’t was no hard matter,” she continued, as she succeeded in filing asunder the chain which bound his hands together; “thou canst now help thyself,” and she moved away to perform the same friendly office towards the other captives, all of whom were now awakened and soon freed from their fetters.

Without betraying any surprise at her presence, or over-anxiety to effect their freedom, the pirates obeyed her directions with respectful readiness. La Blanche, preceding with her dark lanthorn, conducted them through several winding passages, till she reached the secret trap-door through which Sir Philip and his party descended, when exploring the subterranean outlet to the sea-shore.

When the last of the pirates had descended, La Blanche kindled a torch, and, placing it in her brother's hand, bade him there await her return. Re-closing the trap-door, she returned to the cell they had just quitted, secured the bolts and locks, and, taking the ponderous key with her, repaired once more to the dormitory of the warder. Ere she unclosed the door, she deposited her lanthorn in order to make some chemical preparation and resort to the artifice she had done on her previous visit. Not a sound proceeded from within, and with a measured step she advanced to the bed, replaced the keys whence she had taken them, and casting a scornful glance on the pale, deathly features of the poor warder, hurried away to rejoin the pirates.

Without satisfying her brother's question as to where she had been, she groped about for a few seconds, then removing a square flag which discovered an aperture just large enough to admit a man's body, she descended a crazy

ladder with some caution, and stationing herself at the foot of it, guided the pirates in their descent.

The darkness was so intense, so impenetrable—the atmosphere so noisome, so suffocating—and the bellowing of the sea so stunning, yet so mysterious, that the elder of the pirates could not forbear asking La Blanche if she knew well the locality through which she was guiding them. This strange being, with a low inward laugh, briefly replied, “Thou shalt see !” and again taking the lead—the passage being scarce wide enough even to admit one at a time—and holding the torch as high as she could, for the roof was too low to admit of her walking erect, she glided on at a rapid pace that betokened no slight acquaintance with the mysterious, nay, almost appalling subterranean passage.

Panting to draw breath, and brushing away the cold, clammy drops which every moment collected on their brows, the pirates followed, despairing of ever reaching the termination of

the dismal outlet, when, at length, the space suddenly broadened, and a stream of cold, heavy vapour issuing from two off-branching passages, passed over their moistened and aching brows ; they gasped to inhale the current which seemed to bring increased oppression to their lungs, and, instead of assisting, impeded action. La Blanche paused a moment at the one to the right, murmuring between her closed teeth : “ shall we to the Manor, and extort by the strong arm of force, the protection needed ? they would be more than a match for his knaves, taken by surprise, and wrought upon by superstition. Nay, nay, whoever gained aught from the de Carteret by compulsion ?— better trust to my mediation, or our own resources ; they have served us in many a worse straight !” And again she moved forward, but in an opposite direction. The air gradually became less noisome, the darkness less intense, the roaring of the sea more distinct and less unearthly ; they at length found themselves in a spacious cave

through whose narrow mouth the sweet light of heaven faintly streamed; for, already had another day commenced its course. The pirates hurried forward till they stepped out on the smooth sandy beach of the romantic cave of Gréve de Lecq. For a few seconds they drew their breath with a low gurgling sound, as if they had dived deeply, or been too long submerged in the ocean. But this feeling of *mal-aise* soon passed off, and, rough as was their natures, and seemingly impenetrable to sensations of a subduing cast, they gazed around them, evidently struck with involuntary admiration at the beauties Nature here so unexpectedly presented.

The great luminary of the universe was stepping forth from "his chamber in the east," casting around him a rosy effulgence, which tinged, not only the pale blue arch of heaven and the placid bosom of the ocean, but the tall, sharp, fantastic cliffs, which, darting as it were out of the sea, formed a complete *forest* of grey and time-whitened rocks to the right of the cave.

The sea itself came rolling on to the beach with a returning tide, laving the golden sands with a gentle murmur, or leaping lightly with glittering spray over the branching beds of low, granite rock, which checked its course ; sometimes sweeping onwards with a wilder bound, where the beach sloped towards the cliffs, dashing into the grotesque and extensive caverns which it had worn for itself, and terminating a joyous career, with mysterious echoes, that sounded like voices proceeding from a lower realm. The wild pigeon and the sea-gull soared high above their heads, now and then resting on the tops of the towering crags, or skimming to land, over precipices checquered with patches of broad-leaved fern, lichens, and gnarled oaks, uttering their wild but consonant notes, to add to the romance of the scene.

La Blanche, ever restless, broke in upon the very unwonted mood in which her bold, lawless companions were indulging ; bidding them follow, she rounded the jutting projection of

cliffs at the end of the beach, when they found themselves on the very spot, where their *now* captured vessel, had so often, and so safely anchored and remained sheltered from pursuit.

The commander of the pirates, meditating gloomily on a loss which had evidently gone to his heart, had hitherto preserved an obstinate silence, and kept his eyes fixed on the ground, as if he dreaded they would miss some loved and familiar object from that familiar spot. Attracted by a remark from one of his comrades, he now looked up, and a wild exulting shout burst from him. Lying on her beam-ends on the beach, a partial wreck, was seen the vessel which de Brézé dispatched to France, and which, as may have already been conjectured, the pirates had intercepted and made captive.

With an expression of satisfaction, that gave quite another character to his care-worn, time-hardened features, the commander pointed out the vessel to La Blanche, and said exultingly—
“My spirit hath revived within me. I had fully

calculated that the first strong tide, or high wind would have borne the wreck out to sea ; but no, heaven hath ordained it to be a habitation for we poor outcasts of the earth and victims of man's tyranny. She's not to be compared to the one that is gone, but we must be satisfied ; and when she is repaired, betake ourselves to her and to our calling again !"

" I divined as much," said La Blanche, without evincing any emotion. " Meanwhile, brother, thou must content thyself with the poor accommodation I can, as wont, give to thee and thine." Thus saying, she bowed her tall, spare frame, and creeping through a fissure in the cliffs, conducted her companions into the extensive and commodious inner cavern, which was her place of abode, although the miserable hut near " the bloody rock," visited by Sir Phillip de Carteret, was the dwelling assigned to her by the islanders, an error, in which she herself encouraged them.

The interior of this cavern betrayed no lack

of comfort, and was by no means destitute of furniture, though of a rough description. La Blanche had evidently no companion to share this retreat, not even of the dumb species ; and her solitude was never invaded by the foot of man, save at very distant intervals, when the pirates found it necessary to run their pursued vessel into the cave for refuge. In one of the many little recesses, which seemed to have been excavated by the hand of man, to serve as dormitories—but which were, in truth, mere freaks of nature—were piled together on tables and shelves, fashioned by untaught but ingenious workmen—a range of bottles containing chemical preparations ; also a large collection of books, charts, compasses, and parchments ; swords, pistols, daggers, and even armour of fine workmanship. Besides these unexpected stores, there were three chests of enormous dimensions, which probably contained treasures of greater value. Another of these compartments, or recesses, was filled with carpenter's tools, planks, cordage, and canvas ; in short, every thing requisite for

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the use of a ship carpenter. To this recess the commander instantly bent his steps ; the stores, to him, more precious than gold, were scanned with a miser's eye, and as he, after the lapse of an hour, obeyed the voice of La Blanche, which summoned him to partake of the meal she had prepared, he muttered aloud : " There be little wanting to effect my purpose, and that deficiency toil and contrivance must remedy. I could never drag out the remainder of my miserable days ashore ! The sea shall henceforth be my home or my grave ; though there is little to object to in this snug cave, undisturbed as it is, by the passions and folly of men—but it won't do !—it won't do ! I and land have foresworn each other ! " and thus resolved, he obeyed La Blanche's pleasure. Whilst this uncouth-looking party partake of a coarse but plentiful repast, we will quote a page from Inglis's " Channel Islands " respecting the romantic spot where this wild group had found a refuge from a frightful and impending death.

" Grève de Lecq is not a bay, but a cove ;

and to my mind, realizes the precise meaning of the word—such as I have been used to affix to it when, in perusing the voyages of old navigators, I have read that the vessel put into some deep and sheltered cove, in some uninhabited island, in search of wood and water. Such is Grève de Lecq; bounded by nearly perpendicular cliffs, and offering alike in its form and situation, and general features, a perfect picture of a solitary island cove: here, too, the sea has worn caves among the rocks; and the lover of wild scenery and caverns will find abundant room for the indulgence of his curiosity; and here, on a fine summer's evening, when the sun flames up the narrow valley, gilding the gigantic slopes, and when all is still but the low splash of the little waves, one may linger, in the conviction that no island of more distant seas offers a sweeter scene."

To this brief sketch, the author ventures to add some lines penned whilst exploring these romantic haunts with a pic-nic party, about six years ago.

LINES

Written on visiting the Caves at Greve de Lecq., Island of Jersey.*

I paused, o'erwhelmed, and gazed around,
For a thrill of awe crept o'er me ;
I paused—for e'en my footsteps' sound
At that moment seem'd unholy.
A deep, a hallow'd stillness reign'd,
Which coldly mock'd the voice of mirth ;
My tone of feeling quickly chang'd,
My spirit spurn'd the bounds of earth !
Oh ! how it yearned to be free,
And with the curlew wing its flight,
Far away, o'er the bright green sea,
O'er mountain, dell, and rocky height !

* These Caves are so difficult of access, that with the exception of our little party, no ladies have explored them.—We scrambled down the rugged sides of a precipice some three or four hundred feet in height, and overhanging a rocky bay, into which the sea dashed with a tremendous roar. Whenever I since recal the fearful zig-zag track with the horrid chasm yawning to the right, into which one false step must inevitably have precipitated us, I feel astonished at my own temerity.

But ah ! th' aspiring wish how vain !
For, whither could the captive flee ?
Could it shake off the heavy chain,
Which link'd it to mortality ?—
It felt it could not, and return'd
Reluctant to the darksome sphere,
Where it had long in sorrow mourn'd
The loss of all that made life dear !
'Twas thus, in silent fitful mood,
With heart and feelings all unstrung,
'Midst Nature's wildest works I stood,
And wondered whence Creation sprung !
From chaos dark !—ah, could it be ?
The tow'ring rock, the gloomy cave,
The ever flowing treach'rous sea,
And Heaven's lofty blue concave,
With all its brilliant starry train !
Its earths, suns, moons, to us unknown,
Which th' eye of science scans in vain,
And futile doth its powers own !
Yea, from dark void these wonders came,
Obedient to th' Almighty call ;

The sun shone forth with radiant flame,
Inspiring light and life to all !
And next came man, so bless'd so pure,
In th' image of his maker clad,
Till Sin held forth its baneful lure,
And wrought a change, alas ! how sad !
The earth, 'tis true, still beauteous is,
And Nature breathes of hope and joy ;
Yet man to man but sorrow gives ;
E'en pleasure brings its own alloy !
Oh ! whence then springs the wish to live ?
Methinks 't were better far to die,
Than feel that nought on earth can give,
The bliss for which the soul doth sigh !

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“ And who art thou that dar'st repine ? ”
(Thus a mystic voice reproved me,)
“ Oh ! fear'st thou not the Power Divine ?
“ Whose searching eye is e'er upon thee !
“ E'en from the tenor of thy 'plaint,
“ Thou couldst an useful moral draw ;

- “ Thy soul, impatient of restraint,
“ Rebels against its Maker’s law !
“ This earth thou say’st is lovely still,
“ And Nature breathes of hope and joy ?
“ Should murmurs, then, thy bosom fill ?
“ Should wayward thoughts thy peace destroy ?
“ No, rather learn that if o’er earth,
“ Stern mis’ry holds its blighting sway,
“ ’Tis sin and folly gave it birth,
“ ’Tis pride prepares the tyrant’s way !
“ Chase, then, the impious thought that Man
“ Is born to sorrow and to pain,
“ To dwindle out his weary span,
“ And feel that he has liv’d in vain !
“ Oh ! were not reason, feeling given,
“ To lead his steps to peace and bliss ?
“ And love, the brightest gift of Heaven,
“ To soothe and cheer him in distress !
“ True, in this ever-changing sphere,
“ Unfading joy he cannot know ;
“ Yet, can his darkest path be drear,
“ Illumin’d by Affection’s glow

- “ When fame, and fate, and fortune frown,
“ That cheering ray but brighter shines,
“ When worldly friends are careless grown,
“ It heart to heart more firmly binds !
“ Death can alone, the fond tie sever,
“ Or dim the brightness of its flame,
“ Though here extinct, 'tis not for ever,
“ In heaven 'twill live and bloom the same.
“ Thus, if from Joy's pure healthful streams,
“ Man's jarring passions keep him far,
“ If wild Ambition's idle dreams,
“ Do all his better feelings mar,
“ Dare not that Gracious God arraign,
“ From whom came all things bright and pure;
“ Dare not assert thou liv'st in vain,
“ Nor deem earth's ills beyond endure !
“ And now farewell—I must depart ;
“ To chide thee, murm'rer, here I came ;
“ To kindle in thy wayward heart,
“ Th' obedience God doth from it claim !
“ To bid thee check each rising sigh,
“ And dry those unavailing tears ;

“ Can they recall the days gone by,

“ The blighted hope of early years ?

“ Alas ! alas ! it cannot be !

“ The hand that chastens is divine ;

“ Immutable, each wise decree,

“ That issues from his holy shrine !

“ Life has to thee delusive been ;

“ Its joys like brilliant meteors fled,

“ And ere one dark’ning cloud was seen,

“ The storm burst o’er thy careless head.

“ Still, do I ask should’st thou repine ?

“ Should grief within thy bosom dwell ?

“ Oh ! think what blessings still are thine !

“ Mortal, be wise !—farewell ! farewell ’

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I gaz’d around, but nought was there,

Save those from whom I erst had parted ;

Yet ’twas no dream, for dark despair

Had from my lonely heart departed !

CHAPTER VII.

Nearly four weeks passed away, and with them in some measure the consternation, wonder and commotion excited by the extraordinary evasion of the pirates, and the commiseration, not unmingled with censure, bestowed on the unfortunate warder, who was, the day after the prisoners' escape found dead in his bed. From the discoloration and distortion of his features, it was surmised that he had poisoned himself—nor, were there wanting circumstances to give a colouring to the belief that he had put an end to his days—seized with a fit of remorse or ap-

prehension after having liberated the prisoners. A bag of gold coins was found concealed under his bed, and the key of the subterranean postern was missing, so that it was conjectured he had yielded to the temptation of so great a bribe, and set the prisoners at large by means of a thoroughfare, of which he alone, amongst the retainers at the castle, had a knowledge—how they had been provided with a boat to put to sea, was a mystery no one attempted to solve—but, that they had quitted the Island seemed placed beyond a doubt, by the vigilant activity with which the authorities, and even the natives themselves, sought to discover their retreat, and the complete failure of their efforts even to obtain the slightest clue to their movements. Had the wretched warder (whose death it must be observed was occasioned by excessive terror, and not by self administered poison) lived to recount the mysterious nocturnal visit he had received, suspicion would have fallen upon La Blanche, and, in all likelihood, have brought

her to the stake—thus, his death favoured her, as did also the discovery of the bag of coins, which, calculating that he would be dismissed from his post, she had placed, with the keys, under his bed, as a sort of indemnity for the evil she had brought upon him.

As to the seige, to the astonishment of the Islanders, the invaders still resolutely held out, and worked at their boat unremittingly; the besiegers wondering how they contrived to exist. Sir Julien de Montessy was still shut up within the Fortress, yet, du Bois for some time past, evinced an unusual degree of cheerfulness, for which he could, or rather, would assign no cause. Each night, laden with provisions, alternately sent by Jacqueline from the manor, and secretly purchased by himself from mine host of the “Knight and the Dragon,” he wended his way to the Fortress, and deposited his burden at the foot of the bastion, where, at a certain hour, the scaling ladder was invariably lowered. Sometimes he merely gave a signal

for the basket to be drawn up, but oftener, he himself ascended, and passed an hour or two in conversation with Sir Julien — The subject of these long and frequent dialogues may easily be guessed, and the esquire, seeing what pleasure it afforded to his master, dwelt and enlarged upon each word or look from Jacqueline which bore testimony of her devotion to him and interest in his welfare ; thus, a sort of communication was established between the lovers, which, slight and unsatisfactory as it was, had its charms, after so long and dreary a separation.

The minstrel's frequent journeyings neither excited suspicion nor comment, for, he so artfully divided his time and his minstrelsy between those in the camp, and the household, at the manor, that his goings and comings, either in or out of season, were not noticed.

Jacqueline constantly reassured as to the health and safety of Sir Julien, and having obtained from him a promise that the moment de Brézé surrendered, he would quit the For-

tress, now, in some measure, reassumed her wonted serenity; whilst Margaret, blessed with the presence of all she loved, had no wish beyond the moment. Her gaiety was quiet and unobtrusive, but so genuine, so inspiring, that it was impossible to look on her sweet, placid face, without a sensation of pleasure. As to Edward, his happiness seemed to know no bounds—it was for ever exhaling itself in some wild frolic, some lively sally, which excluded sadness, or even seriousness, from the circle of which he formed a member. D’Anneville, the frequent subject of his railleries, smiled and lectured by turns, like a grave, but affectionate elder brother. The old Admiral also seemed to yield himself up to the passive enjoyment of the present; and, if any one betrayed impatience at the protracted state of the siege, it was the worthy knight, whose ardent temperament so little suited him for inactivity. In some occasional ebullitions, he would threaten to batter the walls down about the ears of the besieged,

but the deficiency of battering machines, and the well-proved certainty that the Fortress was impregnable, came to cool his wrath, and he would then divert his thoughts by laying plans and making arrangements for his son's approaching marriage ; for, both he and the Admiral, were desirous it should take place previous to the departure of the latter.

Such was the state of things when Edward was, one evening on his way to the manor, accompanied by la Blanche Vêtue. It was the first time he had seen her since the mysterious voyage he had made under her guidance. Spite of himself, a foreboding of evil assailed him ; yet, he greeted her with a manner, from which gratitude had effaced his wonted restraint ; but the reply of this singular being was marked by the same cold dignity, the same wild mysterious unconnection with earthly modes and feelings. She seemed to take no heed of the expressions of kindness lavished on her, and either to have never felt, or to have forgotten, that she had en-

titled herself to them. She stood before him with her usual cold erect mien, and addressed him thus,

“Edward St. Ouen, a traitor feeds at thy father’s board. Keep watch without the manor this eve—restrain thy natural impetuosity, and thou mayest, by temporizing, gain a knowledge of what is passing in the Fortress, and which the stars have told me it behoves should be known. Again I say, be prudent!—I warn thee that evil is plotting against thee and thine; by promptitude and prudence thou mayest overcome it.”

She then walked on, as unconcernedly, as though her communication had been of the most every-day character. Edward did not venture to interrogate her; former experience had taught him it was useless. He went on his way, pondering on her words, and resolved to obey her injunctions. Having passed an hour at the manor, he took leave of the loved ones there, without alluding to his intentions, or excit-

ing their suspicions by any diminution in the usual buoyancy of his spirits.

The shades of night had now fallen over the earth; Edward paraded full two hours in front of the manor, ere sight or sound greeted him, and when he heard one of the side doors of the gateway deliberately opened and reclosed, his first impulse was merely to screen himself from the observation of the person who came out; but a second reflection, that it was unusual for any of the household to be abroad at so late an hour, changed his purpose, and keeping under the shelter of the wall, he narrowly watched the dark figure to which it had given egress. Though wrapt in a long dark cloak, with the hood drawn over his head, Edward was not slow to recognize the minstrel du Bois. He followed him cautiously for some distance, then springing suddenly upon him, fettered his arms, and thus arrested his progress. Du Bois threw down his bundle and struggled to free himself, but in vain.

“ So, thou art the traitor, false knave ! ” exclaimed Edward, “ confess thy treachery, or my sword shall force it out of thee ! ”

“ Young sir, release me,” said du Bois calmly, “ I am no traitor, neither am I serf of yours, but free to go and free to come—such was the tenure of my service with the knight your father.”

“ But it was no part of his or thy agreement that thou shouldest play the spy, or aid and abet our foes ! Master du Bois thou art my prisoner. I have no mind to do thee bodily harm, so say whether thou wilt accompany me to Gros-nez Castle of thine own free will, or whether I must compel thee ? ”

“ I shall not try strength with ye, St. Ouen, for reasons which it matters not you should know. Yet, if it must be so, to Gros-nez I will go, demanding but one slight grace, that you will allow me to return to the manor but for three minutes only ! ”

“ A strange request truly ! but unless I know wherefore it be made, it cannot be granted.”

“As you please young sir. I am not free to explain my motives, but I repeat that I am neither traitor nor spy, and that the time may come, when ye will rue this unjustifiable conduct towards me.”

Edward, unable to comprehend the meaning of this threat, felt inclined to laugh at the self-importance it seemed to convey on the part of his prisoner; but recollecting *la Blanche Vêtue*'s injunction to temporize, he at once acted upon the suggestion and replied calmly.

“If so Master du Bois, thou canst not object to account for thy being abroad at this late hour, or to state whither thou art bound?”

“It doth not suit me to do either the one or the other,” said du Bois, doggedly.

“And what have ye here?” asked Edward, uncovering a basket which lay at his feet, “provisions—by the saints! this is a glaring proof of thy delinquency—darest thou deny that thou art in league with our foes—that thou wert about to convey this supply to some of them?”

“You are as free to indulge your own thoughts, as I am to keep mine own counsel, Messire de Carteret; though it must be averred, ’tis somewhat hard upon me, that I must pay the penalty of your suspicions !”

Perplexed by the calm, dauntless manner of the minstrel, Edward began to think that he had been somewhat precipitate in his judgment, and that du Bois could not be the traitor of whom La Blanche had warned him—his wily companion, with his usual penetration, half guessed what was passing in his mind.

“Come, Messire de Carteret,” he exclaimed, “confess that your good-nature hath been practised upon by some enemy of mine, who seeketh my downfall, and that ye have done me wrong by your suspicions. Your heart is brave and generous, and if ye would spare it the pang of having caused misery which ye can never repair, let me pursue my way, and convey these poor necessaries to a destitute friend, who stand-

eth much in need of them ; I will pledge my word to present myself before ye on the morrow, and undergo such examination and such punishment as you may deem fit."

"Swear, first, by thy hope of salvation, that thou art not bound for the Fortress, and that these provisions be not intended for any one in it."

"My request must be granted unconditionally, or not at all," replied du Bois.

"Out upon thy insolence," exclaimed Edward ; "thinkest thou I am a dolt, to be blinded by thy paltry subterfuges ? Swear, or yield thee my prisoner !"

"I have yielded already."

"Then hie on thy way to a dungeon where thou mayest learn to be more communicative ; mark me,—no attempt at evasion, or my sword shall pin thee to the earth !"

"I have a sword, too, for the matter o' that, which has seen service in its time, Messire de Carteret ; but I pray of you to keep it for me for the present ; I should be sorry were I tempted

to use it against ye ;” and having presented the weapon, he coolly took up the basket and walked in the direction of Gros-nez Castle, at a brisk pace ; Edward, kept close by his side, vainly endeavouring to extract information, by drawing him into conversation, but he was completely thwarted in his expectation of throwing him off his guard—for du Bois either held a sullen silence, or answered by monosyllables.

So rapid was their pace, that a half hour brought them to the castle ; a profound silence reigned throughout the building, and not a single light glimmered from any of the windows. It was now occupied but by the Seigneur of Anneville, who held the command,—the Melèche family, the warder, and a few invalids, incapable of service. The dungeons were more thickly tenanted, for many of de Brézé’s ferocious soldiers languished within their damp, dreary walls.

Great was the amazement of the warder, on finding that the prisoner committed to his charge, was none other than the minstrel du Bois.

“ The saints be good unto us !” he ejacu-

lated ; “ ’t is hard to know one’s foes from one’s friends ! Is it your pleasure I should put him in one of the tower dungeons, Messire de Carteret ? ”

Edward hesitated ; spite of himself, a latent feeling of kindness pleaded for the Minstrel ; in his nature there was a compound of fearlessness and softness--with the bravery of a lion there was almost the tenderness of a woman. Instead of a dungeon, therefore, du Bois found himself installed in a comfortable but strongly barred chamber. “ I shall not remain here long,” thought he, “ unless my young captor thinks fit to empty my pockets ; a few silver pieces will get a billet conveyed to the lady Jacqueline when morning dawns, and all will be well again ; she will not hesitate to explain—” but here his soliloquy was cut short by Edward commanding the warder to take oath, neither to allow the prisoner to send nor receive communications, under any pretence whatever, unless it were to himself. The minstrel changed colour,

and for the first time betrayed uneasiness. This precaution would baffle his plans, and he might remain a prisoner for days, and then, what would become of his beloved master, whose very existence depended from day to day on the supplies he brought?

Edward, having assured himself that there was no possibility of the prisoner making his escape, was about to depart, when du Bois requested to say a few words to him in private. The warder retired, and Edward, with no little curiosity, waited to hear the minstrel speak.

“Messire de Carteret,” he said, carelessly, “I have changed my mind, and if ye will promise to deposit this basket when and where I shall instruct, and to-morrow, before noon, inform the tire-woman of the lady Jacqueline that I am a prisoner, I will answer the question I before refused to reply to.”

“Oh, ho!” thought Edward, “*une affaire de cœur* with my cousin’s tire-woman! Well, there can be no harm in promising him either

the one or the other," and he readily acquiesced.

"First, then," said du Bois, "ye asked me to account for being abroad at that hour? I reply—because I was prompted by the duty I owe to one whom I value more than life, and who must perish without my aid. Secondly, whither I was bound? to which I reply—to the Fortress of Mont Orgueil, where the valued *one*, for whom I would gladly lay down my life, be enduring all the horrors of famine. Thirdly, where this pannier of provisions was destined to be taken? to which I again reply—to the Fortress, where, ye, young sir, if as true to your word as I have hitherto known ye to be, will within this hour convey it."

"Thou art a strange knave, master du Bois! and hast either a good heart, or a cunning wit. I will give thee credit for the former, and fulfil my promise faithfully. But, prithee, what is the name of the valued *one* to whom this service is to be rendered; some fair damsel, I presume?"

"I have answered the questions I bargained for, and shall reply to none other."

“How then am I to deliver this pannier?—thou dost not think I shall thrust myself into a nest of hornets, each ready to sting me, without knowing to whom I am to appeal, to get me out again? Beshrew me! if the hungry sentinel but savoured its contents, a very small portion of it would reach thy friend!”

“There is no need for entering the Fortress, or having to do with sentinels; you have but to follow my instructions—” and here du Bois explained to him how he was to act.

“But dost thou never enter thyself?” asked Edward.

“Perhaps yea, perhaps nay—but if you have any value for your life, young sir, you will content yourself with allowing the basket to be hoisted, and then to decamp with all possible speed!—but perhaps,” he added eagerly, “you would not object to my bearing you company?”

“Nay, nay,” said Edward laughing, “thanks Master du Bois! I value my life too much for that; but with thy permission, I will don this comfortable houpelande of thine, the night-air

be chill!" So saying Edward fastened the large cloak around him, which Du Bois had a moment before cast off. The minstrel seemed to penetrate his intention, and fearful of the consequences of such a step, he said in a voice of alarm, which he, to whom it was addressed, imputed to a contrary cause.

"How Messire de Carteret! ye surely cannot be so mad as to think of risking your person within the Fortress?"

"I shall pay thee out in thy own coin, Master du Bois, and say I have granted thee all I bargained for, and am free to keep my own counsel!—fare thee well—" so saying, Edward departed.

Having provided himself with a horse, he rode off gaily to Mount Orgueil Castle, with his well provisioned basket. He met with no interruptions on the way, save an occasional "*qui va la*" from here and there a sentinel, to which, without reining in his steed, he replied "St. Oûen, England, and our Charter!" At length, he

dismounted on the very spot, and fastened his horse to the very same jut of rock to which du Bois had secured his mule on his first adventure.

Edward's intimate knowledge of the locality, made it by no means a difficult matter for him to reach the place of rendezvous, to which he was directed by du Bois. On giving the concerted signal, the scaling ladder was, as usual, lowered; fixing the basket firmly on his shoulder, the young man mounted, and stood on the bastion beside a tall martial-looking figure, at whose prepossessing countenance, he eagerly glanced through the opening of his hood—and who was, as already may be surmised, none other than Sir Julien de Montessy.

"Thou art much later than wont, my faithful de Verre!" he exclaimed, "thou hast, I promise thee, made me spend the last hour somewhat uncomfortably on thy account, and de Brézé, I dare be sworn, most impatiently on his own! Come, let's to his apartment, we shall

find him ready enough for his supper—but thou hast forgotten to hide thy pannier under thy cloak.”

“True, true,” muttered Edward beneath the folds of a large handkerchief, which he had tied over the lower part of his face. The young cavalier folded the ample mantle over the basket, observing,

“I would not that any of our poor famishing devils got scent of thy errand here; in faith, every mouthful I swallow, like a thief by stealth, conjures up a gaunt visage, and a pair of hollow, greedy eyes to reproach me with selfishness!—and between thee and me, de Brézé’s turpitude, to say nothing of that arch knave, le Boutillier, disgusts me! They appropriate to themselves alone, a portion which, with moderation, would serve six, and the pittance they dole out to the officers, from whom the secret of thy supply could not be kept, is absolutely a mockery of their misery, and would not insure their silence, did I not add to it from the ample portion it was

thy honest pleasure to stipulate with de Brézé should be reserved for myself. To be plain with thee, de Verre, I think the suspicions of the men-at-arms begin to be aroused, and so I have told de Brézé. How can it be otherwise?—whilst they daily feel and see the horrible effects of famine in themselves and their comrades, and trace it so slightly in their captain and his officers. To my eye, their haggard looks of suffering, have within the last day or two changed to sullenness and discontent. I do not disguise from thee, de Verre, that I should have serious fears where all this would end, but for the cheering prospect of our boat being fit to put to sea tomorrow night.”

Here Edward’s surprize at such imagined fatuity, for he had that very morning seen it little advanced beyond the skeleton, was well nigh betraying him, but he recollected himself—so that the expression of ridicule which hovered on his lips was timely repressed, and he replied in a voice which he attempted to modulate to

the soft pleasing tones of the minstrel, but which the thick folds of his handkerchief rendered indistinct.

“Be you not somewhat too sanguine—” here he was luckily interrupted by the exclamation of his companion

“My good de Verre, thou art ill—thou hast a return of thy late violent malady—’tis of no use to deny it. My poor knave, how can I ever repay thy fidelity?”

“Pardie, ’tis nothing—a bagatelle—a mere pain—a swelling of the jaw, which maketh it difficult to me to speak. I have taken the precaution to envelop my head more warmly than wont—but it pleasures me to hear that the boat will be ready to-morrow.”

“Or the night after at farthest—see, what progress they have made in it!” so saying, Sir Julien ascended a corresponding bastion to the one Edward had scaled, and there, to his no small amazement, he saw a boat about half the size of the one constructing in the front of the

Fortress, on which he had so often looked and smiled. Surprise kept him silent, but he had the presence of mind to seem occupied with examining the stout little bark.

“By my knightdom ! ’tis a clever device of de Brézé’s,” exclaimed Sir Julien, “and though, as thou hast stated, the Islanders have amused themselves with many a joke at his folly for permitting such an idle expenditure of time and wood, he hath nevertheless effected his object with a secrecy that will ensure its success, and whilst they laugh in their sleeves, and watch the progress of the work in front, the little bark, constructed so cunningly, will bring us aid from France !”

“Do ye think her seaworthy ?” asked Edward, scarce knowing what to say, and still examining the boat.

“Sea-worthy ! de Verre, thou art not thyself to-night !” exclaimed Sir Julien, eyeing him fixedly, “thou art not wont to be desponding ! Speak my faithful knave, thou hast no evil tidings concerning *her* ?”

“None, none,” replied Edward; “*ce diable de mal me rend fou!*” and he raised his hand to his face, with an air of acute suffering, without, however, displacing his hood. “Sir knight,” he continued, “with your permission, I will retrace my steps to the Manor, as soon as I have deposited my load; I would fain arrive there before dawn.”

“I must pray thee first accompany me to my apartment, I would trace a few lines to confide to thee, for the lady Jacqueline.”—Edward started, but was fortunately not observed by Sir Julien, who continued: “I scarce dare hope she will deign to read a second billet from me, yet I have somewhat of importance to say, which I omitted in my former one. The occupation of writing to her, and the hope that what I write might meet her dear eye, is so sweet, that I am often tempted to break through her stern commands, and send her the outpourings of a heart, so long and so ardently devoted to her. Under this delusion, I sometimes spend hours in writing,

but then there always steps in the recollection of her fatal vow,—of the lofty, unswerving principles of her noble soul, full of devotion and leniency to others, and cruel stern denial to itself, and my resolution to intrude my hopeless sufferings on her is shaken! my selfish schemes vanish, and I feel inspired with new reverence for the severe virtue which, in lamenting, I never cease to admire, and pages intended for her eye be committed to the flames!” Whilst thus expressing his sentiments towards Jacqueline, Sir Julien led his wondering companion across the portcullis into the interior of the Fortress.

Bewildered by all he had seen and heard, Edward had just tact enough to utter a warm eulogy on his cousin, and after traversing the inner court, he followed Sir Julien along a narrow corridor which conducted to the principal apartments. The sound of voices now, for the first time became audible,—Sir Julien paused at the door from whence it proceeded,

whilst Edward deposited his basket, and said in a low voice,

“With your permission I will await ye here?”

“It will be as well ; I know thou dost not love de Brézé nor his minion !” and Sir Julien, raising the basket with one hand, with the other lifted the latch, and entered.

Edward distinguished the voice of Le Boutilier in the first exclamation of joy the sight of the provisions produced, and he congratulated himself that he had remained without. Sir Julien soon rejoined him with his burden considerably lightened, and led the way up another, but a shorter flight of steps to his own apartment. Here Edward had to face a group of officers, who, in expectation of their usual supply, came crowding around the young cavalier with impatient and hungry faces ; the remainder of the provision was divided into portions, Sir Julien reserving the smallest for himself.

“Thou must not be angry my good de Verre,” he began, when the last of his grateful

guests retired, “but thou seest I am not so faithful to my promise in this respect, as thou, in the excess of thy goodwill for me, would have me be; but I could not reconcile it to my conscience to feast in the midst of famine, and it is only by contenting myself with what is just sufficient to keep life within me, that I am able to digest what I do swallow!—but sit thee down, whilst I write to my heart’s sole idol!”

Sir Julien prepared his writing materials, whilst Edward availed himself of the silence which followed, to cast over in his own mind, all he had seen!—all he had heard!—That his cousin Jacqueline was known to, and beloved by the prepossessing, generous-minded, young cavalier before him, of whom du Bois, from what he could understand was the follower—was the first subject of surprise which presented itself; but his mind did not long rest there. The boat which de Brézé had so secretly constructed in the rear, disguising the noise of the workmen, by the louder one made by those

labouring at a like employment in the front, and in full view of the beseigers, filled him with involuntary admiration for the resources and cunning of the resolute de Brézé, and next with gratitude to heaven, that he had discovered the well-devised scheme in time to prevent its success. But these congratulations were checked by a sudden dread that his assumed character might yet be detected and lead to his arrest ; this thought filled him with such intolerable impatience to be gone, that he quitted his seat and began pacing the apartment.

“ I will not detain thee longer,” said Sir Julien, looking up, and attributing this impatient movement to a fresh attack of pain. Edward feared his impetuosity would betray him, and replied in a smothered voice, as though suffering great anguish :

“ I pray you pardon me, good sir knight, I am somewhat feverish, nevertheless as wont, right joyful to abide your pleasure ! ”

“ Thou hast ever been more mindful of my

happiness than thine own," said Sir Julien, rising with the parchment in his hand, "I will bear thee company to the bastion, thou hast as yet given me no tidings of my Jacqueline,—we can discourse of her as we progress along."

"Right willingly ; for a more noble and beautiful lady the sun hath seldom shone upon!"

"Never de Verre!--never! *Dieu mercie!* thou hast learnt to know her value!"—and Sir Julien placed his hand lightly on the shoulder of his companion, as they wended their way through the corridor.

On regaining the court, several soldiers were seen surrounding the sentinel on duty in the quarter to which they were about to proceed ; they were conversing together in a low, earnest manner. Sir Julien instinctively drew back, and a cloud passed over his brow.

"Seest thou yon knaves?—this is unusual, I like it not: I fear they have quitted their pallets for no good purpose ; so, follow me to the ramparts, we will wait till they have dispersed."

Edward accompanied his companion up the steps, and they traversed the whole length of the rampart without speaking. Sir Julien was the first to break the silence, his thoughts had again reverted to Jacqueline.

“Let us stand here and talk of her,” he exclaimed, leaning over the wall—“what a glorious night it is! serene and majestic as herself! Look at the bright cloudless moon, with what calm dignity it moves along amidst the other little starry worlds above our heads! Thus is Jacqueline ever present to my mind, such as I first beheld her at our court, a bright pre-eminent planet, unrivalled, unequalled!—eclipsing all the minor stars around her!”

Whilst Sir Julien thus poured forth the poetry of his feelings, Edward employed himself, not with gazing at the moon, but on the terrestrial objects which her pure light threw out into bold relief, distinct, yet subdued to poetic softness. To his left rode the stout ships of the Admiral, at anchor; throwing their broad

shadows on the glassy surface of the ocean. Beneath him lay, wrapt in slumber the unostentatious camp of his brave compatriots. As he gazed, he trembled to think how soon their peaceful serenity might be disturbed! how soon their sanguine hopes destroyed! Their destiny and his seemed to hang upon the throw of a dice! Both the young men were aroused from their different train of meditations by the clamour of voices and the sound of heavy footsteps.

“*Le voilà!*” was vociferated by many a hoarse voice.

“Good God! ’tis as I feared!” ejaculated Sir Julien, “our secret is discovered, and the knaves have mutinied!” He had scarcely pronounced these words, ere three or four stout fellows seized upon Edward, with frightful imprecations. Rage, famine and despair sat upon their ghastly features, to which the pale light of the moon imparted an expression at once ferocious and devilish.

Edward struggled, manfully and at length freed himself; but not without leaving the houpelande in the hands of his assailants ! Ere the enemy returned to the attack, he had drawn his sword, and was brandishing it dexterously about him, when his movements were for a moment paralyzed by detecting a pair of fiendish eyes fixed on him, by one who had hitherto been assisting Sir Julien to appease the tumult. At a glance he recognized Roger le Boutillier, and he knew that Roger had recognized him, for a flash of malicious triumph passed rapidly over his face as he turned, and pushed his way out of the throng.

“I am lost !” thought Edward, “and these vile Escorceurs will succeed in their scheme ! If I could but warn my friends of the discovery I have made, I should cheerfully give up life !” —his rumination was cut short, for at this moment his sword was wrested from his hand, and three or four weapons were pointed at his breast, whilst as many hollow determined

voices commanded him to reply to their reiterated question :

“ Had he brought supplies to de Brézé and his officers ? ”

Edward had already given himself up for lost ; yet, he stood with dauntless mien before the infuriated throng, which had been every moment thickening around him ; he neither offered resistance, nor replied to their question—he was, in fact, scarce aware of its import ! his mind was occupied but with the one tormenting thought—“ the boat would put to sea, and bring succour to their hated foe, and perhaps defeat and death to his father and the worthy Admiral ! ” So terrible was this conviction that in very bitterness of spirit, he clenched his hands and bit his lips, till the blood gushed out !

Impatient at this obstinate silence, the furious assailants redoubled their clamour, and with frightful oaths told him to choose between instant death, or an undisguised avowal of the truth.

“Ah!” thought Edward, “they give me a choice! I will confess mine errand to gain time; I might find means to warn my father of the danger which threatens him,” —but ere he could act upon this suggestion, Sir Julien de Montessy, who had been separated from him in the struggle, now rushed forward to his rescue, his sword drawn, his looks breathing resolution and courage.

“Stand back, knaves!” he exclaimed, “no sword shall reach him that hath not first passed through me! Hurt him at your peril! he hath not deserved this cruel treatment at your hands —release him and hear what I have to say!”

Awed for a moment by the steady, resolute demeanour of their superior, the men sullenly released Edward from the gripe of despair and rage which threatened to annihilate him, and then prepared to listen to what Sir Julien, who was universally held in estimation, had to say. The young cavalier took advantage of this momentary cessation of fury, to push his supposed

esquire behind, thus enabling him to ascend to the battery, at the foot of which they stood. The soldiers sent forth a yell and prepared to rush after him, but Sir Julien, with his sword drawn, kept his post at the steps, warning the first who approached, that he would do so at the expense of his life. The calmness and resolution with which this was spoken, produced their effect on the soldiers; they fell back, and he succeeded in gaining a hearing. He spoke conciliatingly, assuring them that him they sought in their mad fury to slay, was none other than his faithful esquire, de Verre, whom he had appointed to rejoin him in the Isle—that he had been kept a prisoner at the Manor of St. Ouen, but escaped, and eluded the vigilance of the beseigers by making his way round to the back of the Fortress, where, he himself had chanced to be wandering, and on recognizing his voice, had given him admission.

“If in good truth it be Master de Verre, he is safe enough from our swords!” exclaimed

one who seemed to be chief in the mutiny, “ I know him well, so, an it please ye, sir knight, order him before us: the sight I caught of his features told me another tale! If it be Master de Verre, more fool he, that’s all I have got to say! Prison fare is better than horse flesh and vermin ! ”

“ Ye must first swear to lay no hands on him my masters ! ” replied Sir Julien, still barring the passage, and never for a moment suspecting the fraud which had been practised upon him— for, in his anxiety to save the life of his faithful servant, all his faculties were absorbed in the difficult task of defending him ; and though he had seen the houpelande torn from him, he had no leisure and indeed no motive for examining the features, then exposed to view.

At this juncture the young cavalier was not a little rejoiced to see Roger le Boutillier making his way towards him with eager haste, accompanied by de Brézé. “ Ah ! ” thought he, “ the fellow, knave though he be, hath done good

service in bringing de Brézé to my aid, it shall not go unrewarded."

"Sir Pierre, your arrival is most opportune!" began Sir Julien, "the life of my faithful de Verre, whom I, as you are well aware, but a short time ago admitted into the Fortress, hath been placed in jeopardy through some strange suspicion of your soldiery; will you convince them of their error, and dismiss them to their quarters?"

"Not till so be our eyes have convinced us we have no grounds to seek redress!" interrupted the ringleader. "We have endured what flesh and blood can endure no longer! Hark ye, sirs; we be men as well as yourselves, and when we thought that ye kept body and soul together in the same way we did, we gnawed in our horseflesh without murmuring, and when that had become scarce, and that our last beast lay pickling in brine, we learnt to be less dainty, and yet said nothing about it, but turned catchers of vermin, and appeased the burning gnawings

of famine with the unsavoury flesh of rats and mice—but *we* have not grown lusty upon such fare ! Day after day we have seen our comrades laid in their graves ; or stretched on their pallets, raving like mad, with neither the forms nor the minds of men left about them ; whilst ye, Sir Pierre de Brézé, and your captains have scarce lost a pound in weight, and neither sicken nor die ! What be we to argue from this ? That because God hath placed ye in a condition above ours, ye be raised above the wants and sufferings of man's nature ? Out upon it ! we be all one in the sight of God, and if He had worked a miracle to feed ye, he would not have overlooked us, because we were poor ! therefore, the thing stands thus : ye, Sir Pierre de Brézé, and your captains, feast upon secret stores, or supplies brought secretly to ye, whilst we be left to gnaw in horseflesh or vermin, or lay us down and die !—but mark me, Sir Captain ; we have come to the resolution of sharing with ye, by fair means or by foul. As to this

knave, we suspect him of being your emissary ; and we have sworn to take vengeance—first on him, and next on ye, and then make our terms with the enemy. So now ye know our will and pleasure, and I pray ye, Sir Captain to make the best use of it ! One word more, and I will prove that ye be all in league to make us your dupes. Sir Julien de Montessy states this fellow to be his young esquire de Verre, and I only wait for him to be brought forward, to send the lie down the false cavalier's throat. I looked well in his face and know him to be no more de Verre than I am !”

“ Thou art right *mon gros !*” exclaimed de Brézé, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder, whilst, with the other hand he held back Sir Julien, who had raised his sword to punish the fellow's insolence,—“ thou art right !—yon varlet be not de Vere, but a base spy, who hath insinuated himself into our stronghold, to spy out the nakedness of the land ! and I, your leader, promise ye a speedy vengeance ! mean-

while, repress your injurious suspicions as to secreted stores ; the thing ye know to be impossible, but I give ye all free permission to ransack the Fortress, and as I am a true knight, all ye find shall be yours. Come, cheer up *mes braves!* our boat puts to sea to-morrow night, and will bring us back provisions and timely aid from your liege sovereign King Louis ; we shall see then who will be masters of the Island. Think, too, how rich a booty will reward present suffering ! Meanwhile, seize yon traitor, and wreak —”

“ By every saint in heaven, they shall not !” exclaimed Sir Julien, enraged at the idea that de Brézé aimed at avoiding exposure by diverting the wrath of his soldiers to another quarter, and intended to sacrifice the life of de Verre to screen himself from their fury. “ Hark ye, Sir Pierre ! I am not one to be trifled with ! Give up my faithful de Verre to the mad fury of thy soldiers, and I swear thou shalt be the next victim. Dost thou understand me ; or must I be more explicit ?”

“ I perfectly understand, Sir Julien de Montessy, that I should well deserve your wrath did I purpose harm to your trusty esquire ; prove that yon knave is de Verre, and I swear not a hair of his head shall be harmed !”

“ You do well, Sir Pierre,” replied the young cavalier, launching a thundering look at the wily de Brézé, who said calmly,

“ To the proof ; produce this *soidisant* Master de Verre.”

“ Ye may follow me, if it be your pleasure, but I give warning that none shall lay hands upon him.”

“ Not if he be de Verre ! *foi de cavalier*, rejoined de Brézé, following up the steps.

Meanwhile Edward, who had listened with breathless attention to what was passing, gave himself up for lost and stood immoveable as a statue, till his eye chanced to fall upon an arbalist ; a sudden thought danced wildly through his brain, he seized the weapon, took the billet confided to him for Jacqueline from his pocket, and having torn off a blank strip, he next drew

forth some tablets, and blessing the gift and the gentle giver, his lovely Margaret, he wrote as follows :

“ De Brézé hath built a boat at the back of the Fortress—t’will put to sea tomorrow night. Du Bois be a prisoner at Gros-nez, and can tell wherefore I came into the Fortress.”

(written by me)

EDWARD ST. OVEN.

Quick as lightning he folded this scrap ; twang went the bow, and off flew the arrow, carrying with it the information of such vital importance to the beseigers—steps were rapidly approaching, and his arm was seized by Sir Julien de Montessy at the very moment he shouted at the top of his lungs to attract the notice of the sentinel below, in which he succeeded, for the Islander instantly ran forward, picked up the arrow, and examined it carefully,

“ Art thou mad, de Verre ! ” asked the cava-

lier shaking him gently by the arm. Without replying to this exclamation, Edward uttered a second exulting shout as he saw the sentinel running off with his prize towards his father's tent. The battery was by this time thronged, but the cry of the excited soldiers had changed its character—"a spy! a spy from the camp!" was vociferated—Edward turned calmly round to face his foes, and, Sir Julien relaxing his hold, exclaimed, "Holy Saints!—it is not de Verre."

De Brézé uttered a hoarse laugh—"Nay but 'tis a d——d spy, who shall pay dearly for his impudence, or I am not Sir Pierre de Brézé!" he exclaimed with exultation. "Ho! there, my knaves, march him off to a dungeon, there to await whilst we erect a gallows, that they who sent him hither may have the pleasure of seeing him dance off to another world!"

A loud demoniacal shout followed, Edward was seized and dragged down the steps; he caught the fiendish glance of le Boutillier, and felt that his doom was fixed beyond redemp-

tion, but his brave heart bounded triumphantly in his bosom, as he thought, though his young life was sacrificed, his country was saved.

CHAPTER VIII.

Whilst Edward in the solitude of his dismal dungeon endeavoured to resign himself to his fate, and struggled to repress the images of recent bliss which rose up to mock his present misery ; a scene of deep consternation—of unspeakable anguish was passing in the camp of his friends. Sir Phillip, at first, doubted the authenticity of the billet, he looked upon it as a mere artifice on the part of de Brézé—but, employed to what purpose, he could form no plausible conjecture.

D'Anneville, who had been summoned to the

knight's tent, as well as most of the other Seigneurs, thought otherwise. He hesitated not to assert, that the hand-writing was Edward's—as he had instructed him in the art, he was allowed to be the best judge, and the incredulity in which the father had taken refuge yielded to the most agonizing fears.

After a few minutes consultation, two of the fleetest horses were saddled; one messenger was instructed to proceed without delay to Grosnez, to bring du Bois to the camp; the other, to ride to the manor, to ascertain whether Edward was there or not, as it was known he had left in the day, with the intention of not returning from thence till morning, but, the latter messenger was recalled, in consequence of a timely observation from d'Anneville, that, as Edward's military duties occasionally kept him absent from the manor for two or three days together, it would be needless cruelty to alarm the ladies there, till something certain was known. A boat was next sent out to bring the Admiral

ashore. Sir Richard instantly obeyed the summons, and arrived at the camp a few minutes after the messenger from Gros-nez, who was accompanied by the minstrel, du Bois. He found his friend, Sir Phillip, overwhelmed with the conviction that Edward was in the power of the cruel de Brézé. On being interrogated, du Bois replied to such questions as were necessary to prove that Edward was, beyond doubt, a prisoner in the Fortress; but, obstinately refused to answer all others, either concerning his own real character, or the person whom he had run such risks to serve. Yet, to do him justice, it must also be confessed he evinced much anxiety at the perilous situation in which the young heir of St. Ouen was placed, and he felt even more than he expressed.

Soon after morning dawned, one of the Islanders came with breathless terror into the tent, announcing that a gallows had been erected on the rampart during the night, and that the soldiers were crowding around it, as if in expecta-

tion of some event. Sir Phillip, as he listened to this harrowing piece of intelligence, betrayed emotion only by the compression of his lip and the contraction of his brow, but the friends who had assembled around him and who—sympathizing deeply in his affliction—had not yet dispersed—could not suppress their dismay. As to d'Anneville, his anguish of mind seemed little inferior to that of the soul-stricken knight ; when he had so far mastered his feelings as to be able to speak collectedly, he, with all the eloquence of his nature, all the warmth of friendship, argued that it was the duty of the Islanders to sacrifice all personal interest, if, by so doing, they could rescue Edward from death, urging, that he had evidently acted upon some secret information, or well-grounded suspicion, and had taken upon himself this most hazardous enterprise to benefit his country, and he proposed that terms should instantly be offered to de Brézé, so advantageous as to tempt his acceptance of them. In this he was warmly seconded

by the Seigneurs, the Bailli, and the other public authorities, whose civic duties as we before observed, in no wise exempted them from those of a military character in times of necessity, and who, accordingly, were encamped with their brother Islanders.

In the general anxiety for the safety of the young de Carteret, the important information he had obtained for them, at so great a risk, was overlooked for the moment, or they might have turned it to their advantage in the terms which they, after some discussion, came to the determination of offering to de Brézé, and which permitted him and his followers to leave the Fortress, wearing their arms. and carrying with them all their personal property ; with a restoration of all prisoners, including du Bois, and an indemnification for the ships which had been destroyed, besides a sum of two thousand crowns, instant provision for the garrison, and a passage back to their native land.

This ransom was rejected by de Brézé with

scorn ; and, in triumphant insolence, he dictated to them such conditions as neither Sir Phillip nor Admiral Harleston could accept. The former, was to give up the Island, to swear allegiance to France, and vassalage to him, Sir Pierre de Brézé—to restore all prisoners as well as the small fire-arms and ammunition which had been captured---to provision the Fortress for a month, and furnish a sum of three thousand crowns ! Sir Richard, on his part, was to withdraw his ships, and make indemnification for those which had been destroyed. Four hours only were allowed them to deliberate.

Dismay and consternation seized the brave little band of Islanders. Each seemed to feel the cruel misfortune which had befallen their beloved captain, as acutely, as though it were personal. Many even generously proposed, that de Brézé's terms, ruinous as they were, should be accepted : d'Anneville, above all, was strenuous in his arguments that with certain modifications relative to Sir Richard's participation in

the treaty, it was the duty of all to subscribe to them, as, had Edward not discovered de Brézé's stratagem for obtaining aid from France, King Louis, acting upon such information, would not have failed to send a naval force superior to that of Admiral Harleston, in which case, with the Fortress still in possession of the foe, their defeat was certain---therefore, by yielding *now*, their actual position would not be worse, if so bad, as it would have been had the boat been despatched, and brought succour to the besieged. The reasoning was specious, and the wretched father listened to him with glistening eyes, but unchanged purpose. Even could he bring himself to sacrifice the welfare of his country to save his son, there was an insurmountable obstacle to the acceptance of the Escorceur's conditions---the part of them which rested with Sir Richard Harleston, neither his honour as a man nor his duty as a subject of the King of England, would allow him to comply with ;—and Sir Phillip, arousing himself from the

lethargy of grief which had hitherto paralyzed his energies, arose to address his friends, whilst his usual expression of calm dignity took place of the agonizing contraction of features, which silently spoke the depth of suffering he was too much of the stoic to manifest. The sudden change was apparent to all---and all derived from it an augury of good, and a bright hope that, amongst the resources of his powerful mind, he had at length hit upon one that would be available in this melancholy crisis ; but their expectations were cruelly deceived when he thus addressed them.

“ My friends, I am grateful for the deep sympathy ye have all manifested towards me in this most bitter reverse of fortune !—this dire calamity ! which all of ye who be fathers can judge, hath gone deep into my heart. But I bless the merciful God who hath seen fit thus to afflict me, that He hath also pointed out the means of saving my dear, my noble boy from destruction : but I must first crave of ye, my friends, as

a reward,—if ye think I deserve any for the poor services I have strove to render ye,—that ye will, one and all, subscribe to the proposal I have to make.”

“ Name it !—name it, brave St. Ouen ! ’tis all that’s needed,” energetically exclaimed every one present, in an irrepressible outburst of gratitude.

“ I thank ye all for this proof of confidence, my friends ; but I will not tax ye too severely. Remember, ye have pledged yourselves !—swear, then, to make no concessions whatever to that arch-fiend Pierre de Brézé, under any pretext whatever, and to resist and hold out against his unlawful authority so long as a man remains amongst ye to cry, ‘ King Edward ! ’ ”

A deep silence followed. An appeal of so contrary a nature to the one they expected, amazed and confounded all. D’Anneville alone, of that assembly, comprehended what was about to follow.

“ Sir Phillip,” he said, “ ye must pardon me,

but my affection for the generous friend who hath so nobly dared his fate to render his countrymen a service, demands that I should speak out boldly, and remind the friends here present, that they have also a duty of gratitude to perform towards him, as well as towards *you*, and that they ought not to deprive themselves of the possibility of rescuing him, by taking the oath ye require, until they fully know your motives for exacting it."

"Then, they shall know," replied the knight, calmly, "but I will first require of them to answer me a simple question. If ye had two things, my friends, in your possession which ye much valued, one of which was well nigh worn out with time and service, the other, in all its newness and prime, and giving promise of becoming more and more valuable; which of the two would ye throw away, if some sudden necessity required ye to part with one or the other?"

"The old one, beyond doubt, Sir Phillip," exclaimed the little Bailli, who only examined

the question in an economical point of view, and thought his friend somewhat deficient in his usual display of sound sense in asking any one to solve such a simple, obvious query.

“ Well my good Bailli ! ’tis precisely to a like conclusion that I have come, and as the question in this instance, regards my son’s life and mine own, in which my simile holds good, I have come to the decision, that it is best I should give my life rather than his ; I, therefore, intend to become his hostage ; but I would first engage ye by a solemn oath not to interfere with my purpose, save ’t were at the mere outlay of a few crowns, which I know ye would not grudge to ransom me, should this de Brézé be content with treasure in lieu of my half worn-out carcass : but I would impress upon ye that I would not owe my life to the sacrifice of your privileges and rights, and least of all, to the forfeit of your allegiance to our gracious King Edward, whom may God in his mercy preserve ! And now, my friends, give me this promise, in

token that my past poor endeavours to preserve these blessings to ye, have merited some little indulgence at your hands.”—There was a death-like stillness throughout the assembly; each glanced in the bewildered face of the other, as if hoping to find in it the index of what was passing within their breasts, from which they might take a clue to frame their own response,—but the same mingled look of amazement, incertitude, pity, and admiration sat upon the countenances of all. The Admiral turned abruptly away to hide his tears, and d’Anneville remained with both his hands clasped over his eyes and his elbows resting on the table, as if still in the act of listening. The bailli, moved by the simple honest affection he bore his old friend, at length replied, with an energy quite unusual with him.

“How now, St. Ouen! in troth, ’tis somewhat a strange method ye require of us to take to prove to ye our gratitude for having saved our lives and our property from the gripe of the

lawless band, to whose tender mercies ye now ask us to swear to deliver ye ! A strange manner truly for those who, like myself, de Rozel, here, and many others, have been fed and housed by your generosity for the last six months, to pay our debts by throwing ye into a lion's den, and swearing not to lend a hand to help ye out ! Now in good sooth, I, for one, will not subscribe to it. Great as may be my regard for your brave boy, ye must propose some other means for delivering him from his enemies. I'll dare be sworn that the meanest serf in the Island, would not blacken his conscience by consenting to such a deed. Nay, nay, St. Ouen ! we will give up our goods, our lands, to prove our gratitude, but we will not willingly become thy executioner ! God would never bless us, nor ours, hereafter, did we commit so heartless—so foul an act, after all the benefits thou hast heaped upon us !”

The impetus thus given to their feelings by this honest outburst of eloquence, on the part

of their worthy magistrate, was conclusive. Almost all the Islanders present, positively declined to subscribe to the conditions ; a few remained neuter, moved by the earnest arguments of the devoted father.

An oppressive silence again fell over the agitated assembly, which was broken by d'Anneville.

“ Sir Phillip,” he said, “ do not push this dreadful measure further for the present, but permit me to offer one word of advice. The time afforded us for deliberation must be nearly expired ; let a proposition be made to de Brézé to furnish him with a supply of provisions for three days, provided he allow ye a like number to deliberate on the terms he hath exacted for your son’s ransom. In this scrap Edward saith,” —here the speaker’s voice became unsteady and he paused, as if to read the slip of parchment he raised, so as to screen his eyes—“ my friend states, that the boat will put to sea this night—now, if de Brézé be not aware of his having

made this important communication, the frustration of his scheme for obtaining aid from France, which is now in our power, will tend to render him less exacting in his demands ; and then, Messires," turning to his silent listeners, " you will have an opportunity of demonstrating your gratitude towards your brave captain, by freely and gladly coming forward with the ransom the escorceur will be ready enough to accept."

Sir Phillip pressed the hand of his young friend with a grasp of iron, a few large tears, the first he had shed, rolled slowly down his cheeks. " God bless thee, d'Anneville !" was all he could say.

CHAPTER IX.

Amongst the number of those who crowded to the ramparts when de Brézé proclaimed the conditions upon which the life of his prisoner might be ransomed, was Sir Julien de Montessy, though he had already interceded for the life of Edward, he did so without knowing either his name or condition, prompted merely by the interest which the dauntless bearing of the young man had inspired: his request to see him, to hear what had become of de Verre, about whom he saw sufficient grounds for uneasiness, was, upon some frivolous pretext, denied, and le Bou-

tillier had charged himself with the mission, bringing back, in answer, a well fabricated tale of his own. Thus, on hearing the name of the prisoner, a film fell from his eyes, and sorrow seized his heart. He thought of the bitter hate le Boutillier had unscrupulously avowed to the de Carterets, and he now comprehended why, during the revolt, he had sought de Brézé with such alacrity and brought him to the scene of contention. Sir Pierre, too, maddened by his mortifying defeats, had often sworn to take bitter vengeance upon the Seigneur, to whose bravery and exertions he attributed them, and de Montessy more than dreaded, that the vindictive mind of the commander, urged on by the fiendish malice of le Boutillier, would subject their unhappy prisoner to every species of insult and suffering, and eventually to a torturing death. His anxiety and apprehension were increased tenfold by recalling the tender affection Jacqueline had expressed for her cousin, and the thought of the affliction his untimely fate would

cause her. He also remembered all that du Bois had said of the young man's generous and noble qualities, and that he was on the eve of being united to the object of his affections,—a gentle, loving, amiable young creature, who was, moreover, the bosom friend of his own Jacqueline! These reflections filled him with sorrow; and he felt for Edward the lively sympathy, the warm interest of a personal friend;—yet, with all his zeal to serve him, his power was limited, and he knew enough of de Brézé to be aware, that he must proceed very cautiously, and above all, refrain from manifesting the full extent of his anxiety for the prisoner.

Placing a restraint on his feelings, therefore, the young cavalier sought the commander, and, as if accidentally, led the conversation to the hardy enterprise of the youth, asking carelessly, if he really intended the prisoner should suffer death at the expiration of the four hours, in case of his friends refusing the conditions offered?

“*Pardie*, Sir Julien; ye would make but a

sorry negociator, since ye can ask such a question!" replied de Brézé. "Swing on the gallows this lion's cub most undoubtedly will, if my conditions be refused, which well I know they will be ; but not till we have drawn some profit from him—provisions and delay be all we need. You witnessed the foment which was well nigh ruining us last night ; the knaves be grown desperate, and we ourselves have but a sorry prospect before us ! *Tonnerre de Dieu !* I have no mind to sup upon pickled horseflesh, e'en for one night, much less for many, and this scapegrace must be kept alive for a few days to provide us with food ! I shall, in *my mercy*, grant a respite of three days, upon condition of the castle being provisioned by his friends for a week ; at the end of that time we shall obtain aid and supplies from France, or the devil's in it !"

"With such bright prospects before ye, Sir Pierre, ye can, methinks, afford to be merciful, and in consideration of the youth of your pri-

soner, be satisfied with punishing his rashness by some weeks' dungeon discipline, and let him off for his life for the consideration of a weighty ransom, and such prisoners as Sir Phillip de Carteret now holds of yours, and amongst the rest de Verre, to whom even ye, methinks, Sir Captain, owe some little gratitude?"

"Well, well, we will think about *him* ; but, for the others, they may go to the devil!—had they fought like proper men, they would have resisted, have conquered or died. Suffer oneself to be taken prisoner, *c'est une lâcheté*,—there be always weapons at hand in a fray, or in a field of battle, with which a man may settle his account. *Mais v'là!*" he exclaimed, as a trumpet sounded, "we must go and list to the dutiful announcement of our new vassals."

Sir Julien suffered him to depart, and a moment after, repaired alone to the rampart, to make himself master of what transpired, that he might regulate his actions accordingly. The respite demanded for the prisoner was accorded,

and the soldiers, mad with joy at the prospect of food, threw their caps in the air, laughed and shouted by turns, in a sort of delirious mirth that jarred on the feelings of the young cavalier. He retreated to the solitude of his own apartment, and there passed the day in planning means of escape for the unfortunate Edward, on whom he was convinced de Brézé meant to wreak the bitter wrath which had been so long accumulating in his breast against the Seigneur of St. Ouen. Having determined to visit the prisoner at nightfall, whilst his commander's attention was engrossed by the experiment on which he had founded such sanguine expectations, and which was then to take place, he obeyed a summons which had long been unheard within the 'precincts of the castle, and took his place at a well-spread board, where mirth and jollity presided, and where many a coarse jest was bantered on the lucky chance which had procured them such an abundant repast.

De Montessy ate little and said less ; but on de Breze making some jocose allusion to the greedy avidity displayed by his soldiers on receiving their rations, he observed that the poor captives who had so long been sharing the same revolting fare, must also be not a little content with the unexpected change in their diet."

"*Sacré Dieu !*" exclaimed de Brézé, " we be not guilty of such wanton sin, as to waste any of it on them !—let them finish their pickled horse and return thanks to their patron saint, if they have got any, that we have not been obliged to pickle their carcasses as well as those of our poor beasts."

" But the women ?" continued Sir Julien, with difficulty repressing his disgust, " they surely be entitled to some compassion : and there are many among them whose condition in life can have ill-fitted them to endure such dire hardships !"

" *Ventre St. Gris !* Sir Julien de Montessy !—if thou hast a mind to turn knight-errant, and

stand up as their champion, I will throw ye my gage!—but as *I* am commander here, and commander mean to remain, it doth not suit my humour, that my pleasure should be interfered with ; nathless, if there chance to be a bright-eyed wench amongst them, for whom thou mayest have some little lingering good will, why, in that case, ye have but to point her out, and she shall this very moment be placed on my right hand, and feasted like a queen ! But they tell me the daintiest and most squeamishy amongst them, have thought proper to go to another world, not liking the fare they got in this ! and that only two or three tough old dames remain to tustle with adversity, so, if you have not lately bethought ye of your *amourette*, I fear me, your tardy concern cometh too late !”

Sir Julien disdained a reply, and as a torrent of idle ribaldry followed, which revolted every feeling of his nature, he arose, and with undisguised loathing quitted the apartment, which had now become a scene of disgusting excess.

The lynx eye of Roger le Boutillier followed the retreating figure of the cavalier ; he whispered a few words to de Brézé, who answered in the same under-key. Roger nodded a smiling acquiescence, and also left the room.

Sir Julien de Montessy strolled from one rampart to another, wrapt in meditations of the most gloomy nature. After a while he succeeded in shaking off the morbid feeling of despondency which had assailed him, and earnestly devoted his thoughts to the means of liberating the prisoner. Chance brought him to the spot where such active preparations had been carried on during the day for launching the boat. He found every thing in a state of readiness, even to the machine so cleverly contrived under the directions of de Brézé, for lowering the little barque, by means of pulleys, into the element for which it was intended. Some of the workmen returning to put the finishing stroke to their handy-work, the young cavalier retreated to a distance, and to pass the interval which must

elapse ere he could visit Edward, seated himself on one of the guns, and insensibly began musing—not of bolts, bars, and dungeons, but of his beautiful, his long-cherished Jacqueline. At length, de Brézé, followed by the greatest part of the garrison, arrived at the spot where the important launch was to take place; he then quitted his solitary position, and went in quest of the under-warder, who, as he expected, had received orders to admit no one to the dungeon of the young de Carteret, but a few coins glided into the ready palm of the man in office, made him quite willing to believe that the commander could not have possibly included Sir Julien de Montessy in the prohibition.

As they wended their way through the dark noisome vaults, an occasional groan smote on the heart of the cavalier; gladly would he have carried comfort to every wretched being lodged within those dreary abodes! but alas! it was not in his power to afford them the slightest—and he hurried along his conductor, with a

heart-felt sigh to the miseries in which he could only sympathize.

“How now!” exclaimed the warder, stopping short at the bottom of a flight of steps, “what the devil have we got here?—a couple of sentinels!—why, whose doing be this? I have heard nought of it, and they were not here at noon when I carried the prisoner his carrion fare!”—They had now arrived face to face with the sentinels—“With your leave, my masters,” he continued, selecting a key from his ponderous bunch.

“We may give admittance here to none, Master Le Noir,” said one of the soldiers, barricading the narrow passage with his fire-arms.

“*Va t'en à tous les diables!*” replied the warder, knocking aside the arquebuse, “*tonnere!* I should like to see who would dare interfere with me in my office! Hinder me! Jean le Noir, under warder for twenty years in the service of the great Louis of France; hinder me

from visiting my prisoners ! *Sacre bleu !* a pretty joke truly.”

“ Joke, or no joke, master key keeper, ’twere more than our lives were worth to allow any one to enter this dungeon. If the duties of thine office call thee there, thou can’st enter, but it must be alone, or rather in my company, such be the strict command of our captain.”

“ Pardie knave ! knowest thou not this cavalier to be the young knight, Sir Julien de Montessy, the honoured friend and ally of our noble captain ? *Tiens, tu est bête à manger du foin*, if thou thinkest to hinder him ! ”

“ If he were King Louis himself, I could not admit him without an order from Sir Pierre de Brézê,” replied the soldier in so sullen and determined a voice, as to convince Sir Julien he was not to be won either by threats or bribes ; he took his measures accordingly, and said with well assumed indifference

“ The matter be not worth disputing about, I merely wished to gratify my curiosity by asking

the youngster what could induce him to personate my trusty esquire, de Verre, and also learn when last he saw him."

"I hope no offence, sir knight, but my orders be positive."

"*Mille diables!* thou art a dolt! Thy orders might be positive, but could not include Sir Julien de Montessy?" again argued the warder.

"Truly, master warder, thy judgment be mightily at fault, seeing the cavalier be just the one whom they most regarded!"

"How knave!"—exclaimed Sir Julien, "hast thou the boldness to assert that Sir Pierre de Brézé dared cast such a slur upon me?"

"Your pardon, sir knight," replied the sentinel, fearing he had gone too far, "but his worship the Bailli said ye might be inclined to favor the stripling, if he gave ye tidings of your esquire, and that mayhap ye might try to save him for his sake."

"Well, well, I shall settle this point elsewhere! Master Roger will not lord it over me I promise him!"

“Then ye will be the only man, sir knight, over whom he doth not lord it! a paltry upstart! more fit to be a headsman than a magistrate!” muttered the warder, following the retreating steps of the young cavalier, “he’s for ever up to some mischief, that incarnate devil Roger, and he has heaped more suffering upon the heads of his poor countrymen, than all of us put together, I can promise ye, sir knight! One poor maiden, the daughter of the Seigneur of Senmaresque, he took it into his head he would marry, and because forsooth, she would none o’him for a husband, he starved and terrified her to death! Our captain had a mind to another o’them, and she, you know, poor wench, threw herself into the sea!—then there was their brother, a queer cunning, little devil—ye must remember him, sir knight—he either drowned himself too, or made his escape by some lucky chance, so out of the whole family, there’s only the old dame left. I carried her a piece of boiled horse-flesh for dinner, but she refused it with loathing, so I went and fetched her the remains of my rations,

but she hadn't a mind for that either!—most likely even, 'tis all over with her by this time!”

“And he will next gratify his hellish malice on that poor youth!” exclaimed Sir Julien, vehemently.

“By my troth will he!—he hath even begun already; but the youngster hath got a stout heart within him, and bears up bravely—'tis n't every man would have the courage to pass a night in the dark in company with a skeleton!—The blessed Saints be my witness, I would not for one! but I wish, sir knight, ye had seen his quiet, contemptuous smile, when Master Roger—that's a slip, but never mind, since his worship is not here, let it pass—and as I was saying, I wish ye had seen the youngster when Roger pointed out the dumb, disagreeable sort of companion he was to have, and then the change to sorrow that came over him, when he, Master Roger, added, that he could not complain, since he committed him to the company of his father's old friend, the Seigneur of Senmaresq.”

“Profane wretch!” muttered Sir Julien, and slipping a gold coin into the hand of his companion, entreated, as a last favour, that he would henceforth supply the prisoner with wholesome provisions, whilst such lasted. The warder promised faithfully to share his morning’s ration with him, and Sir Julien startled by the distant report of guns and the hoarse murmur which came from the bastion, hastened to ascertain the cause of these unexpected sounds, where such strict silence had been enjoined by the commander, in order that the suspicion of the beseigers might not be aroused. He had not far to go!—De Brézé, foaming with rage and uttering the most impious oaths, rushed by, and grasping the warder by the arm, fixed his terrible eye upon him, and holding the point of his sword to his heart, bade him confess that he had been tampered with by the prisoner, and had forwarded some communication from him to the beseigers! In vain the poor wretch urged the impossibility of his having done so. De Brézé

persisted; he asked "if he had not assisted in unloading the supplies, sent by the Islanders?"—the warder admitted that he had.

"Mayhap thou wilt also allow that thou hast some of thy ill-gotten lucre about thee now, accursed knave?" exclaimed de Brézé, grasping at the pouch, towards which his lynx eye had detected sundry nervous movements of the right hand, on the part of his trembling victim.

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted the tyrant, as the ill-omened coins le Noir had just received rolled out upon the ground—ha! ha! ha!—and now, traitor, take *my reward!*"—as he spoke he thrust the sword up to its very hilt into the body of the warder!—"Ha! knave, thou dost not like it quite so well!" he added, with a hellish laugh, as the poor wretch sunk at his feet with an expiring groan.

So rapid had been the accusation and the punishment, that Sir Julien had not time to interfere; it was with the greatest difficulty he now mastered his indignation sufficiently to forbear

drawing his sword, and punishing the tyrant for his cruelty. He read a like feeling on more than one of the squalid faces of the soldiers' who had by this time flocked around them.

"Ho there!" vociferated de Brézé, "fetch hither the head warder, bid him come and do the duties of this traitor dog"—spurning the corpse with his foot. A murmur, not loud but deep, was heard. No one stirred to do his bidding.—"How now, poltroons, knaves!" he shouted, "will ye not take warning and be more prompt in your duty? Bestir ye, and fetch hither Loisel!—be ye all deaf or dolts?"—still no one stirred.

Fortunately at this moment Loisel appeared, or it would be impossible to say to what results the mad fury of their leader would have led.

"Take the keys from this worthless carcass, and conduct the stripling, who came hither to beard and betray me, to the council hall, we will try if torture can wring the truth from him, and then see that all be in readiness to suspend him

from the gibbet. And you, my knaves, hark ye!" addressing the still sullen soldiers, "go and prepare a glorious bonfire hard by, that his friends may not lose the pleasure of seeing him swing, owing to the darkness!"

"I must first have a word with you Sir Pierre," interposed the cavalier, who had now learned the truth, at which he had at first guessed, namely, that the boat in which such sanguine expectations were placed, had been captured.

"And pray what may that word be, Sir Julien de Montessy? I pray of ye let it be a short one, we have no inclination for idle prating just now."

I *mean* to be brief, Sir Pierre, but I feel it to be a duty to myself, and these brave men, who have already suffered so much,—to ask whether or no ye mean to capitulate, now that your last hope of succour hath failed, or whether you intend to condemn this unfortunate garrison to the lingering torments of death by starvation?"

"And pray what business is it o' thine, Sir Julien de Montessy? Pierre de Brézé is not in

the habit of explaining his motives, or accounting for his actions," was the Escorceur's reply, as he turned fiercely round.

"It concerns me much," was the quiet answer. "In the first place, I have no mind to starve; and in the second, I will not see these poor fellows doomed to the tortures of hell, to gratify your obstinacy. There is now nought left to us but to accept the favourable terms of capitulation that have been offered by the besiegers; I therefore protest against this young Islander being put to death, since our lives and safety depend upon his."

A loud murmur of approbation was heard. De Brézé drew his sword, and foaming with rage, called upon de Montessy to defend himself:

"There can be but one captain here," he exclaimed; "if thou hast a mind to rule in my stead, thy sword must win the right, and the devil give thee joy o' it."

"I have no desire either to measure swords,

or dispute power with you, Sir Pierre, but I again repeat, that as a knight of France, you will dishonour yourself and your country, by putting the prisoner to death ere the respite to which ye have pledged yourself, hath expired. Moreover, I, also, a knight of France, and late your companion in arms, do protest against such want of faith, and against the wanton barbarity of dooming a whole garrison to death to gratify your wilful obstinacy, and unworthy passion for revenge."

The Escorceur stamped his foot in rage. "Hell and confusion!—this to me!—to Pierre de Brézé! Sir *Mal-a-pert*, draw!—But, no!" he exclaimed, with a contemptuous sneer, re-sheathing his sword; "by the soul of my father, thou shalt die a less glorious death!—yea, thou shalt swing on the gallows with the old fox's whelp!—side by side, two traitors as ye be; and, hand-in-hand, shall ye go to hell together! Ho, my jolly knaves!—speed ye, to kindle the bonfire, and rear a second gallows;

the spy, and the coward traitor, who shrinketh from danger, as ye be all witness this recreant knight hath done, shall dance out of life together !”

“Never, never !” shouted full a hundred voices ; “Sir Julien de Montessy be a right valiant knight ; he hath spoken nought but the truth ; he hath shown himself our friend ! We will have justice, and not live like dogs ! Vive de Montessy !—liberty and food !” This last sentence was added by the soldier who had been speaker in the previous manifestation of insubordination.

“Vive de Montessy ! Liberty and food !” vociferated every man present, and this time the officers joined in the clamour. De Brézé was livid with rage. He stamped, he foamed, he cursed : then, drawing his sword with the rapidity of lightning, rushed forward, and at one blow severed the head from the trunk of the bold mutineer. Placing his right foot on the headless body prostrated before him, and still

brandishing his terrible sword, he commanded his followers to lay down their arms, and retreat to their quarters.

The speedy act of vengeance he had taken failed of producing the effect he anticipated. So far from intimidating his followers, or quelling the mutiny, it brought it to a crisis. There was a pause, like the momentary stillness of the mighty elements when, warring with each other they suddenly become mute, till, having collected fresh strength and fury, they rush on again to fiercer contact ! This ominous silence was broken by the brother of the murdered soldier.

“Revenge, or death,” he exclaimed. “Comrades, if ye be men, die like men, and not like dogs.”

There was one unanimous shout,—“Down with the tyrant!”—and then a general rush. Sir Julien de Montessy stood alone ; his weapon was unsheathed—he would not draw it against de Brézé, nor could he find it in his heart to

defend him, although he saw him fighting like an enraged lion. The pale light of the rising moon wrapt every thing in mystic indistinctness, yet the gigantic form of the Escorceur chief towered so much above the tallest of his assailants that Sir Julien never for a moment lost sight of it, and he watched the progress of the fray with a feeling of bewilderment, as well as of uncertainty as to how it would end. At every blow of his long muscular arm, de Brézé prostrated a foe, and more than once, he cleared a space around him ; such had been the case, when the light of a torch gleamed from the opening which conducted to the dungeons.—Loisel, the head warder appeared, bearing a torch, and followed by the prisoner, with his feet and hands manacled like a criminal. De Brézé uttered a savage yell ; cut a passage through his assailants, and darted towards the young man.

Edward was so completely bewildered with the sudden clamour which burst on him, and

his eyes so dazzled by the moon beams, after having been so many hours accustomed to intense darkness, that he was quite unconscious of the peril which threatened him ; and though Loisel muttered a terrified—“ *Jesus Marie!*”—and retreated for shelter under the narrow arch from which they had just emerged,—he stood his ground firmly, screening his eyes with his arm, thus vainly endeavouring to aid his vision. The whizzing of the sword of his mortal foe above his head alone told him of his danger. At that fearful moment he felt himself suddenly knocked backwards, and he fell to the ground with a violence that stunned him. A tremendous clash of swords followed, and part of a broken blade fell on him—it was that of Sir Julien de Montessy. His rapidly unsheathed sword had received the blow, which must have dealt instantaneous death had it fallen where it was intended.

So momentary was the whole transaction, that the soldiers were impressed with the belief, that

the prisoner was slain by the hand of their captain. Their fury roused to madness by this treacherous act, they rushed upon him, and ere he could face the danger, full half a dozen blades were buried in his body!—but the brother of the murdered soldier dealt him his death wound. His weapon, wielded by the hand of vengeance, penetrated to a vital part through the muscular frame which seemed almost impervious, so wonderfully had it escaped the blows hitherto aimed at it. De Brézé fell on his face, and with a frightful curse expired! Sir Julien de Montessy shuddered. He crossed his breast, and unconsciously murmured aloud,—“God have mercy on his soul!”

The soldiers stood around the corpse, silent as the grave; their arms hanging listlessly by their side, their heads drooping on their steel-clad breasts! An indefinable feeling of awe crept over them; they seemed scarce to believe that *he*, to whom they had been accustomed to look up to with such fear and respect, whose

words were laws, more sacred with them than holy writ, and far more strictly observed than those instituted by worldly legislators ; they could scarcely believe that he, their dauntless, their resolute, their tyrannic commander, was now a senseless thing of clay, deprived of strength, of life by their own hands !—cut off in all the insolence of power, the security of pride ! As they gazed, they seemed as though the truth had for the first time come home to their hearts,—*that they themselves were mortal*—that the present moment was the only one they could reckon upon, and that the next might witness their own death-struggle ! There was no grief, there was no remorse in that dead stillness, yet there was awe ! they gazed upon their slaughtered chief, and their fury was calmed !—the voice of conscience whispered, not, what have we done ? but, what are we ?—since he, the proud, the mighty, has been so soon laid low ! ”

Sir Julien, meanwhile, bent over Edward, and

raised his head from the ground ; consciousness quickly returned, and an expression of satisfaction lit up his countenance when he recognised the features of his supporter.

“ Messire de Carteret,” began the cavalier, “ I trust you will forgive the unceremonious blow with which I greeted you ; I saw no other means of cheating de Brézé’s sword. By my spurs ! you have saved your head at the expense of a bruise, which I trust will soon be healed.”

“ It is to you, then, Sir Stranger, I owe my life ? May my gratitude be the foundation of the esteem and friendship, which something hath from the first moment whispered to me, ought to subsist atwixt us ; but,” he added, in an altered tone, “ I talk of forming new ties on earth, as though, forsooth, I had not a few moments before bid an eternal adieu to those which have, and which still would have rendered life so sweet. Your kind interposition will but give me a temporary respite. I expect, I ask no mercy at the hands of the ferocious de Brézé.”

“ You have nought to fear from him,” interrupted Sir Julien, “ his guilty soul even now is pleading at the high tribunal of Heaven for that mercy which his hardened nature denied to all on earth ! ”

“ How ? ” exclaimed Edward, gazing around him with amazement.

“ De Brézé hath fallen a victim to his own evil passions,” resumed Sir Julien, “ see ! there he lieth ! a poor mass of mortality, slaughtered by his own followers—by the very men who have for years submitted to his tyrannic will, and borne his abuse and blows as patiently as so many brute beasts ! I fear too, that I am in some measure the cause of his death. I saw that he was bent on your destruction, and had no means of saving you, except by arousing the minds of the men to a sense of the injustice he was guilty of towards them, in refusing the advantageous terms of capitulation which were offered by your friends on condition of life and liberty being granted to you. But, as so gene-

rally happeneth to all who resort to the dangerous experiment of rousing the passions of the ignorant, even though it be to effect an object both desirable and praiseworthy, I failed in my views of temporizing. I merely sought to arouse them to a sense of what was due to themselves, and to urge them to claim that right with firmness and moderation—but, as you see, they have taken the law into their own hands, and the result hath been violence, blood-shed, and death. What will be their next step, 'twere difficult to say; but of one thing be assured, your life is sacred!”

Ere Sir Julien finished speaking, the soldiers moved towards him. The panic of soul (if we may so call it) had passed, and their feelings had assumed their wonted turpitude.

“Vive de Montessy!” was their cry, and the proposal, that he should be their leader, followed. Sir Julien addressed them with the most happy eloquence—he advised them to accept the terms of the beseiged, and restore their

prisoner to safety. The soldiers gave a shout of joy on learning that their scape-goat was not slain, and promised implicit obedience to the commands of their new leader, Sir Julien de Montessy. Such an appointment, however, was by no means ambitioned by the young cavalier, and he excused himself from it most dexterously. The eldest of de Brézé's Captains stood near, and he pointed him out as one whose experience better fitted him to command. De la Grue was accordingly nominated their Captain, on the condition of his ratifying the terms of capitulation.

CHAPTER X.

At the very moment Sir Pierre de Brézé was struggling with death, his worthy coadjutor was eagerly wrenching open a large chest which stood in his chamber, and which, he knew, contained a horde of ill-gotten wealth.

“Whew!—here’s what will make a man of me after all!” exclaimed Roger, dragging out a leathern purse filled with gold coins and crown pieces—“thanks Master Pierre de Brézé, ye have made a tolerable good cater for your humble servant. Who’s the wisest of we twain now?—your knightship biting the dust to which

your mouldering carcass will soon make a considerable contribution ; or I, Roger le Boutillier, enriched by your gleanings, on the point of setting off for foreign parts ? with sufficient gold in my pouch to lord it with the best o'them ?—*Tête de mort !* a casket !—locked !—no key !—*c'est egal*, I have one at hand ! ” and whilst he spoke the lid flew open, yielding readily to his instrument. “ Whew ! whew ! ” again ejaculated Roger, “ by our blessed Lady, but here be gems enough to ransom the souls of a hundred kings from purgatory ! the devil's in it if they can't make a simple knight of me !---but this casket will be deucedly in the way ;—I have hit it,”—and he thrust the glittering ornaments into his pockets with as little caution, but as greedily, as a child would snuggle sugar-plums. This done, he re-closed the chest, hurried to his own chamber, and bolted the door inside ; he then opened a closet, and took a bundle from it the contents of which in a few minutes transformed Roger in external appearance into a

jolly monk. He next fastened his treasure, by means of a leathern belt, round his waist, from which a pouch was suspended on either side of him, concealed by his cassock ; he then drew the cowl over his face, and carrying a scaling ladder in his hand, made his way rapidly down a short flight of stairs, from thence into the *basse-cour*, and finally reached the bastion, unquestioned and unobserved. He fixed the ladder ; cast a furtive glance around, and descended. Gathering the folds of the cassock as well as he could around him, he waded through a path which was not quite to his liking, for, in consequence of a spring-tide, the rocks were covered with the sea, and more than once, he felt a sensation nearly allied to fear, when from any inequality of the ground, the water rose higher than he calculated upon ; and it was to his no small contentment, that he once more gained a beaten track. He at first hesitated as to his future course, but finally decided on making a detour of three miles to avoid passing near the encampment.

It is no less strange than true, that the schemes of the wicked for committing evil are generally crowned with success, whilst those of the virtuous, to work good, are but too often rendered abortive ! There is a mystery in this which startles us at the first view we take of it. To the unbelieving and the wavering, it is a stumbling block ; an exciter of fresh doubts ! to the true Christian a confirmation of faith---he answers in the words of Holy Writ---“ The devil, like a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour.” And what have we to oppose to so formidable an adversary ?---the weakness, the frailty of human nature ! What marvel that the battle is so often to the strong, where the weak add to their weakness, want of faith, and supineness. But, return we from this digression into which the successful escape of the iniquitous Roger le Boutillier has for a moment led us. He is now standing beneath the casement of mine host of “ The Knight and the Dragon,” whose attention he has, at length, suc-

ceeded in attracting, by throwing sundry handful of gravel against the casement of his sleeping apartment ; mine host thrusts his grisly head through the narrow aperture, in no gentle tone demanding “ who’s there ? ”

“ A silver swan ! ” is the reply. The password seems to be understood ;---the grisly head is withdrawn with a grunt, and, in a few seconds, the door opens.

“ Well, Master Roger ! ” was the exclamation of the host, when he had replaced bolts and bars with extreme caution, “ thou art the last man I calculated upon admitting into mine hostelry this night ! how the devil didst thou get here ? ”

“ By his worship’s express aid, mine gossip.”

“ Aye, aye, ’tis said he takes care of his own ! ” chuckled mine host, “ but thou’rt none the less welcome for all that, Master Roger,” he added quickly, seeing a dark cloud gather on the brow of his guest, “ and as I have told ye before, one good turn deserves another ; thou once saved me from having my brains beat out, and if I can

return thee a like favour, why 't will be an obligation taken off my mind, and I suspect 'tis some such aid thou art come to ask of me now ? there's fine doings, I hear !”

“ Aye, aye, mine host, the game is up with us to some purpose ! Sir Pierre hath been sent to another world by his own loving followers, who had no mind to feast any longer upon horse flesh and rats, and the Fortress is about to surrender. I knew what sort of grace I had to expect, so took myself off.”

“ Then there's an end to my thousand crowns, and my grant of land ! ” groaned forth mine host, “ there's nothing for it but to turn and cry “ King Edward,” and make the most I can of my poor hostelry.”

“ Thou mayest cry “ King Edward ” till thy throat be dry for the future ; 'tis what I would especially enjoin both for thy safety and mine own. Harkee, mine host ; the grant of land is no longer mine to give, but the thousand crowns shall not fail of being thine, if thou dost con-

ceal me till such time matters be returned to their old state, and I can make my passage across to France."

"Nothing more easy, Master Roger," replied mine host, rubbing his hands; but suddenly checking himself: "that is, if thou wilt pledge thy word the thousand crowns shall be forthcoming. My coffer hath been fairly emptied by all the contributions that proud, overbearing Seigneur of St. Ouen hath thought proper to lay upon me. And then such havoc in my—"

"Never lament thee, man; he shall be paid out yet. I have not forgot that I was chased from his domain like a dog; pointed, scoffed at by even the lowest of his serfs; threatened with the ducking-pond, reviled, vilified. I, the son of an old retainer; the son of her who suckled the graceless cub, that in his sanctity thought fit to expose me to scorn and beggary, and who, forsooth, must needs lord it over me and preach morality! *Sacré tonnerre!* when I think of the humiliation that cursed knight and

his d---d sanctified son have heaped upon me, it makes my blood run boiling through my veins as though 'twould ne'er cool again till I have in return drained every drop from their's."

"Nay, but good Roger, dost thou not over-rate thy grievances? Folks did say that the Seigneur treated thee with more leniency than might have been expected, and that if he had the *mind* as he had the *power*, he might have suspended thee from a certain *ugly elevation*, at a certain *ugly spot* on his domains."

"*Va-t'en à tous les diables sot!* What! hang a man for not marrying a whimpering wench?"

"Not precisely for *not* marrying her,—but, but, a—hem—" and mine host seemed somewhat alarmed at his own boldness; "but you know, Master Roger, I ain't accountable for what folks say, yet there was a talk that you thought it wiser to *strangle* than *marry*, and that the young de Carteret—"

"*Sacré Dieu!*" interrupted Roger, with eyes

flashing fire, and in a voice that made mine host tremble, “fool as thou art, thou oughtest by this time to know what value is to be placed on the tales of silly women. But, get thee gone, and bring hither a flagon of thy best Burgundy, it sets my throat on fire to talk of that cursed, hypocritical St Ouen ! By every imp in purgatory, I will repay him, or my name’s not Roger le Boutillier !” And as he spoke, there was a ferocious expression on his countenance, that again made mine host start. “No, no ; I will not be cheated out of my revenge, as well as my goodly *Seigneurie*—but more of this anon ! And now say where it be thy purpose to bestow me, mine gossip ; for I swear to thee by my hope of revenge, which is the thing I hold most dear, that the thousand crowns shall be thine if thou wilt shelter me from the malice of my foes, and do all that is in thy power to aid and abet my plans.”

“Agreed, Master Roger. I swear to the conditions, by my hope of wealth, which is the thing

I love best in the world ; and now follow me, I will show thee a snug retreat, where thou mayest set thy mind at rest, though thy body may, perhaps, not be so much at ease as at this moment ; but for the matter o' that, if thou preferest more space, I will coax my dame to give thee up our chamber, which thou canst occupy, and only betake thee to thy strong hold within, upon an alarm of danger. Mayhap, Master Roger, thou wilt add to the thousand crowns some little trifling matter for the good dame herself, it may make her more tractable, for, between ourselves, the hiding-place I destined for thee is none other than the 'sanctum sanctorum,' wherein be deposited such stores as it be necessary for us to put by for a rainy day ?"

" Well, well, we won't fall out about it ; thy dame shall have thirty crowns for a new head-gear, and a farthingale.

CHAPTER XI.

The sun had but once shed his farewell beams on the stout walls of the Fortress of Orgueil since the respite of three days to Edward de Carteret had been announced from them, when a trumpet blast was again sounded. It passed shrilly and appallingly from the ear to the heart of the good old knight, who sat alone, and buried in affliction within his tent; he started up, and rushed out. What could that summons portend? his over-wrought fears whispered—death!—death to his brave, his only child! De Brézé, enraged at the frustra-

tion of his scheme, was about to revoke the respite he had accorded, and take summary vengeance on the person of Edward. As he quitted his tent, he was accosted by d'Anneville, who involuntarily started at the change which had taken place in his old friend: his eye had lost its fire, his step its deliberate firmness. There was a calm resignation almost amounting to sternness on his features, but it required little penetration to be convinced that his manly breast was the seat of the most cruel anguish.

Sir Phillip hurried on, followed by his brother Seigneurs, who, one and all, poured out of their respective tents to learn the nature of the new parley. Here we feel inclined to pause; for how shall we find words to describe the feelings of the brave, the generous, the noble-minded parent (who had only given himself up to despair from the moment he was not suffered to offer up his life, a ransom for that of his son) when a herald from the ramparts announced, that, that son would be restored to him on the

terms being ratified which were offered to the besieged on the previous day. Heroic as had been the firmness with which it endured misery, his heart yielded almost with womanish weakness at this sudden change to joy. Clouds of mist swam across his eyes ; his senses were confused ; he, staggered, and had but just sufficient presence of mind to seize hold of d'Anneville's arm, to prevent himself from falling.

"The Lord is merciful !" he at length murmured, "The Lord is merciful ! He hath not left me desolate in mine old age !" and he buried his face on the friendly shoulder which supported him ; d'Anneville bade him look up ; he did so, and beheld Edward on the rampart, waving a recognition to him ; he had been conducted thither in proof of his safety and the good faith of the besieged. Obeying the impulse of nature, the father stretched forth his arms with yearning affection exclaiming : " My boy ! my Edward !" then falling upon his knees, he raised his voice in humble thanksgiving to

Heaven, whilst tears rolled slowly one after the other down his cheeks ; nor did any of the warm-hearted friends present feel ashamed of the sympathy which their moistened eyes betrayed, as they grasped the hand of their general benefactor, and poured forth their congratulations ! but the parent's joy, found the liveliest echo in the generous heart of d'Anneville . . . We linger not over the signing and sealing of preliminaries. The Islanders consented to fulfil the terms they had previously offered, with the sole stipulation, that Roger le Boutillier should be given up into their hands to abide the penalty of his repeated and shameless treachery. But the subtle Roger, as we have already seen, had put it out of the power of the newly appointed leader, to comply with the demand ; and de la Grue, fearing that the conclusion of the treaty might be retarded, or rendered less advantageous if he made known the fact which was but too apparent, of le Boutillier's evasion, judged it most expedient to set the matter at

rest, by affirming that he had also fallen a victim to the famine, which had cut off full one half of the miserable band he now commanded.

As Sir Phillip believed it impossible that Roger could effect his escape from the Fortress, even with the connivance of the garrison, he received this statement without any suspicion of its veracity : and if the fate of the abject warder excited no commiseration, it certainly called forth some lively regrets, since it had been the means of disappointing the enraged Islanders of wreaking the full measure of their hatred and vengeance on him. Far different were their feelings, when to the demand that the prisoners within the Fortress should be instantly set at large, in exchange for those still in the Castle of Gros-nez, the appalling announcement was made, that, with the exception of an aged female, not one unhappy Islander remained to tell the dismal tale of suffering they had undergone. Some few of the garrison had survived, but they were paid soldiers of England, under

the late command of Perrin Nenfant, and had from the first followed his example in taking the oath of allegiance to de Brézé. The horror and consternation of the Islanders were so powerfully excited when they discovered the cruel privations and untimely fate of their countrymen, that many amongst them, in the bitterness of their indignation and grief for the loss of relatives or friends, urged the knight to retaliate, by putting to death the prisoners still in his power ; but the injustice and inexpediency of such a measure was soon made apparent by the dispassionate reasonings of their able captain ; and leaving them to yield, though not without reluctance, to the unqualified conditions of the treaty, we return to Sir Julien de Montessy, and the now liberated Edward de Carteret, who are, meanwhile, walking arm in arm on the rampart, engaged in a conversation as earnest and confidential as though their friendship had been of years' standing. The countenance of the young cavalier wore its usual expression of

sadness, and it was with a mixture of anger and grief, that Edward thus interrupted him when announcing his intention to depart with the troops of de Brézé.

“How, Sir Julien! leave us at the very moment I felicitated myself on the acquisition of a friend,—nay more, a kinsman. Ye have saved my life, and, trust me, where existence offers such charms as it at this moment doth to me, ’tis a service for which gratitude be too poor a name. I will leave no stone unturned till I have brought about your happiness, and that of my dear, noble-minded Jacqueline. As to my father, I can vouch for it, his gratitude will not fall short of mine; he will right heartily undertake to intercede in thy behalf with mine uncle Wallis, who, if he have a heart of flesh and blood like other men, and love his daughter, as such a daughter should be loved, will, in spite of what ye say to the contrary, yield to our joint entreaties. Nay, nay, ye shall not leave us so soon, Sir Julien!—no, I swear ye shall not!”

The cavalier smiled painfully. "My tarrying would be of little avail!" he said with deep sadness, "for Jacqueline will never be induced to see me!"

"Not see ye?" ejaculated Edward; "ye must labour under some strange delusion. My life on it, she loves ye too well to be thus obdurate. I could adduce full twenty instances of painfully suppressed emotion—of unaccounted for suffering, which must prove to ye, that your love be not unrequited. My dear, much loved cousin," he added, with emotion, "what a patient saint hast thou been! Yes, yes, de Montessy, hadst thou witnessed the struggles I have witnessed, but could not understand, thou wouldst be assured that that noble heart is thine."

A gleam of pleasure stole over the pale features of the young cavalier, yet he sighed with much bitterness:

"Yes, she loves me," he said mournfully, "I have, at any rate, *that one* blessed consciousness

to keep me from despair! If I should never have the bliss of calling her mine, I shall never have the anguish of knowing her to be another's!"

Edward seized his hand: his very soul spoke out in the pitying look, with which he gazed on the speaker.

"Thou shall, thou must be happy!" he ejaculated, "such faithful, such enduring love must surely meet a reward! Accept our poor hospitality for a time, and I vouch for it, all will be well."

"But Jacqueline!" interrupted the cavalier.

"Is all goodness, all compliance to the wishes of others—she will list to reason."

"Yes, St. Ouen, she is all goodness, all heaven-mindedness, but she is inflexible in the path of duty. Alas! alas! bear with me!—when the heart has been long disciplined to expect misery, it opens slowly to admit hope. I am grateful my friend, for your kind intentions, but, forgive me, if I say I am too sadly convinced they will

be disappointed in their aim. Geoffry Wallis is not a man to be moved by entreaties ; what he hath once said, he is never prevailed upon to unsay. I cannot account for the violent hatred he hath conceived against me, but this I believe, he would rather see his child wedded to the grave than to me—in truth, such was his own declaration—and Jacqueline, my noble Jacqueline, I may not present myself again before her. List, St. Ouen, she has bound herself by a solemn, a cruel vow, to see me no more, without that parent's consent."

"Come, come ! despair not thus de Montessy, vows may be absolved, his Holiness the Pope will set all that right."

Sir Julien shook his head. "No, no, he said, "I know her religious principles are too sacred ever to admit of such an interposition ; even here I cannot open my soul to the hope you place before it."

"Well then, only promise to accompany me when we quit the Fortress, and be guided by the

counsel of my father. I can with all security vouch for his hearty zeal in your cause. He loveth our Jacqueline as tenderly as though she were his own daughter, and when he knows her happiness is concerned, 'tis not a light matter will deter him from making ye both happy."

Sir Julien pressed the hand of his new friend with grateful warmth, and yielded to his reasonings. A faint gleam of hope, spite of his better judgment, stole over the darkness which shrouded his prospects.

CHAPTER XII.

The ladies Jacqueline and Margaret, accompanied by their tire-women, the major domo Petit Jean, and, at a more respectful distance, by other menials of Sir Phillip de Carteret's household, stood on a rising ground which commanded a view of Mount Orgueil Castle, and the Bay of Gorey.

The earth was pompous with its flowers and verdure; the sky dazzling with its pure canopy of soft uninterrupted blue—but it was not to admire the magnificence of nature that the little party had assembled—their eyes wandered not

from the objects spread out immediately beneath them—the Fortress of Mount Orgueil with its drawbridge lowered, its massive gates thrown open, and the plain crowded with active and joyous beings, where the hum of voices mingled with the strains of martial music, and where the very standards floated gaily above the tents in the morning breeze, as if rejoicing that they no longer feared being trampled under the foot of a ruthless foe. If the eyes of the fair young friends did for a moment wander from these two objects, it was only to scan the beautiful Bay of Gorey, with its rich woodlands sloping down to the level of the sea—its extreme point fining off like a needle and running full a mile out into the ocean, like a soft green line traced delicately across the placid surface of the water, and gradually widening as it curved into a circle and formed a woody arch over the smooth, glittering sands of the beach, now decorated with dazzling white foam, which the green waves of the Atlantic, as they rolled lei-

surely in, festooned in graceful playfulness. And even here, their eyes sought but the objects in connection with the primary ones—these were the galleys which, with sails flapping indolently in the breeze, were in readiness to receive the squalid band of Escorceurs about to march out from the Fortress.

Many a bitter sigh heaved the bosom of poor Jacqueline which she struggled in vain to repress, and Margaret often took her hand in silence, as though fully comprehending, and deeply sympathizing in the sad feeling which gave rise to them. Suddenly, the breathing of the Norman maiden came so thick and fast, that her companion feared consciousness was about to forsake her, but Jacqueline made a violent effort to conquer her emotion, and, with a grateful pressure, she gently disengaged her hand, and walked slowly away. Margaret looked pityingly after, but did not follow her.

The cause of this new and sudden emotion needed no explanation. Arm in arm might be

seen two youthful cavaliers crossing the draw-bridge, followed by the squalid band of Escorceurs. In one of these cavaliers, she, with the quicksightedness of love, recognized Edward ; in the other, intuitively, Sir Julien de Montessy, and her eye followed their movements with intense interest. There was a general rush forward on the part of the Islanders, and then a deafening shout ! Edward was clasped in his father's embrace, and in that of the Admiral—then came a host of friends, each of whom seemed anxious to be foremost in greeting him. Next, she saw the hand of his companion warmly grasped by Sir Phillip, and in their turn, by her father, and all of the Seigneurs present. There was something in all this, which she did not quite understand, for, although admitted into Jacqueline's confidence respecting Sir Julien, she knew nothing of the danger which had menaced her lover. The unusual circumstance of his having been so many successive days absent from the manor had awakened only a little justifiable

pique, that he had not found, nay, even *made* time to see her.

Whilst Margaret tried to account to herself for a meeting so joyful and *empressé*, the troops of de Brézé had halted; the new leader advanced, and respectfully saluted Sir Phillip de Carteret, who returned thé courtesy coldly. The word of command was then given; the Islanders drew up in a compact body, and the humiliated garrison, with measured step and earth-bowed heads, began their march, saluting the governor as they passed. A dead silence was observed; the brave Islanders were too generous to insult a fallen—a suffering foe, and it was not till the last of the boats pushed off from the shore with them, that the very sky seemed rent with acclamations of triumphant joy.

Margaret remarked that the young cavalier who leant on the arm of Edward remained behind; and she became quite confirmed in her first impression, that the stranger was Sir Julien

de Montessy, when she saw Sir Phillip once more cordially greet and lead him to his tent. At that moment, the cold, damp hand of Jacqueline was placed on her's,—she started to see the death-like paleness of the beautiful face which looked so entreatingly, as in a voice scarcely above a whisper, she asked her to remount her palfrey and return to the Manor. Margaret betrayed her surprise, for it was agreed that they should wait there to be joined by her father, Sir Phillip, and Edward. Jacqueline read what was passing in her mind, and whispered :

“ He did not depart with the rest !—I must not—I could not see him now !”

Margaret pressed her hand affectionately, and without comment sprang upon her palfrey. As they cantered off at a brisk pace, the roar of artillery burst from the batteries of the Fortress, the British standard again floated on its staff, never more to be lowered by the hand of the stranger !—there she still floats, and there

will float, whilst there be an Islander who can draw a trigger, or wield a sword. Then came the shout of human voices echoing from the crowded ramparts and glacis—from the long line of tents and densely thronged heights, till the very rocks seemed to ring with joy. A second thundering report of artillery was followed by a merry peal of bells from every church in the Island.

To these sounds of exultation and triumph the heart of the happy Margaret throbbed in joyful cadence. Jacqueline smiled too, but it was sadly, and she hurried on her companion, as if anxious to escape from the tumultuous sounds of jubilee, which jarred so keenly on the bitter feelings of anguish which were rekindled in her breast. Leaving them to pursue their journey thus expeditiously, we return to Edward, who has espied their retreat from the hill, and who, on finding that his father was acquainted with all the particulars of Sir Julien de Montessy's hopeless attachment through Jacqueline herself, and

scarce needed the stimulus of gratitude to prompt him to espouse his cause, whispers, a few words apart to the young cavalier, introduces him a second time to his friend d'Anneville, who has not for a moment quitted his side, frees himself from the renewed congratulations of his friends, mounts a steed which is waiting for him without the tent, vaults into the saddle, and, dreaming bright dreams of love and happiness, speeds off to the Manor, where he arrives a quarter of an hour after the ladies. Jacqueline had retired to her room, and Margaret was alone. She did not, as was wont, come forward to meet him, half angry that he had played truant for nearly three whole days, a delinquency which she determined to resent by a little *mine boudeuse*, which, without deigning to notice he repaid by folding her with irrepressible delight to his heart, and imprinting the most passionate kisses on her pouting lips and crimson brow. Margaret withdrew herself, confused and displeased, from this unexpected and ardent em-

brace ; but, very few minutes elapsed ere her sweet face again beamed with tearful love and joy. The lover, in excusing his absence, did but allude to the peril from which he had so providentially escaped, when the little hand which had been withdrawn in anger, voluntarily glided into his, and a pair of soft, melting, blue orbs fixed with tender concern on his happy face,—so happy, indeed, that the maiden, though she shuddered at the risk he had run, could devote but a small portion of the blissful present to regret for an evil which had passed. The sweet enjoyment of that moment of undisguised affection, was broken in upon by the tramp of horses in the court. Edward started in surprise.

“ Arrived already !” he exclaimed. “ Sweet Margery, where shall I find our dear Jacqueline ?—I have promised Sir Julien to prepare her for his reception.”

“ She hath retired to her chamber,” replied Margaret. “ Oh ! dear Edward ! I would give

much that she might be prevailed on to see him ! It is so cruel !—so dreadful, after such long absence, such tried constancy !”

“ Thou wouldst not be so cruel to me, Margery !” urged Edward, entwining her slender waist with his arm, as they left the hall together ; the youth, to await his cousin in a little “ sanctum sanctorum,” which had been fitted up under the guidance, and with the assistance and contributions of the Seigneur of Anneville, as a sort of study for the fair friends—and Margaret, to repair to Jacqueline’s chamber, and inform her of what was passing.

The Norman maiden had spent the interval in prayer ;—her countenance was composed,—her mind had regained its wonted equanimity ! and Margaret, divided between astonishment, pity, and admiration, saw her descend to meet Edward with all the placid resignation of a saint, and with the firm determination of not infringing on the dictates of conscience and duty.

It were needless to detail the particulars of the conversation, the result may be known by the angry and disappointed manner of the generous youth, as he quitted the room and repaired to the hall. He beckoned his father apart from the guests who had accompanied him to the Manor, to partake of its warmly proffered hospitality. A few words sufficed to bring a cloud over the brow of the good knight, and he instantly quitted the apartment.

“How be this, my Jacqueline?” he exclaimed, entering the room where his niece sat, her face buried in her hands, and the tears which Edward’s recital had called forth, rolling slowly down her pale cheeks. “How be this?—but the day before yestern thou didst implore by the dear love I have for thee, that I would rescue this brave young knight; and now that he’s my guest, and that thou, and all of us, should try how best to serve and prove our gratitude to him for saving the life of my dear boy, thou dost wilfully refuse even to do the

honours of my house to him!—what means this? Thou art above the caprices of thy sex; thou couldst not play the coquette with such honest and constant affection.”

“My dear uncle,” said Jacqueline, in a calm, sad voice, “I will not reply to such a query; thou canst not, thou dost not think so meanly of thy poor Jacqueline as to need it. When I unburthened my heart to thee, and implored thy aid for Sir Julien de Montessy, I was actuated by the indistinct rumour which reached me, that his faithful follower de Verre was made prisoner; in which case, I had good cause to know the life of his unhappy master was threatened either by famine or sword, and I fled to thee as my last hope for saving one, whom I blush not to avow, is more dear to me than life itself.”

“And yet, now that he be under the same roof with thee, thou dost perversely refuse to see him. Come, come, neice, this is a romantic observance of duty which thou mayest rid thy-

self of. I will engage to plead the cause of Sir Julien de Montessy, not for *thy* sake, but for *mine own* ; to pay off a debt of gratitude which only so rich a treasure as thyself could adequately defray ! Thy hand, fair niece ; let me lead thee to where thy presence will bring sunshine and joy.”

“ Nay nay,” said Jacqueline, drawing back ; “list but for a moment, and I will tell thee why I cannot, dare not, meet Julien de Montessy.”

“ Cannot ! dare not ! God give me patience ! I will not list to thee, neice. How !—when my hall be crowded with rejoicing friends whom I have invited here to celebrate this proud day of triumph, thou dost refuse to do the honours of my house and bid them welcome ; thou who hast so long been to me a daughter—the pride, the delight of mine eyes, gracing my board with thy presence, and cheering my guests by thy graceful courtesy ;—how can I bear to see thy place vacant on such a day !”—but observing tears tremble on her eyelids, he continued in a

softened tone :—" Come, sweet niece, yield to my prayer and do not mar my enjoyment by thy obstinate adherence to an over-nice sense of duty ; besides," he added, with a coaxing smile, " thou art so far raised above the standard of poor, frail mortality, that thou canst well afford to pleasure thine old uncle though it be at the expense of thy over-scrupulous conscience."

" My dear, kind uncle," murmured Jacqueline, in a half suffocated voice, " there is little my grateful heart would not prompt me to do, to pleasure thee in all things, but in this I know thou art actuated as much with a view to my gratification as to thine own ; believe me, did I listen to the pleadings of my heart only, thou wouldst not have to ask my presence a second time." She paused, her pale lips quivered. " Dear, dear St. Ouen," she resumed, imploringly, " do not try to shake my purpose. Bitter, most bitter, is the self denial I am bound to practice ; thou shouldst rather encourage me in it by thy approbation, thy sympathy. Thou

canst not know what it costs me !” Here again she paused : the tears which could alone save her heart from bursting, gushed forth more unrestrainedly.

Poor Jacqueline !—well might she say her uncle could not know how much that bitter struggle between affection and duty cost her !—’tis not in the nature of man to feel, to comprehend the deep, concentrated, undying devotion of a woman’s love—with him ’tis a resource, a respite of the mind—with her it is existence ; the end, the aim of all her thoughts and actions, as regards the things of earth—it expands her feelings, awakens her energies, sustains her courage, and directs the sensibilities of her nature into a wider and more useful channel, and is the living principle which raises her soul to God in gratitude for the blessings of this life, as well as for those promised in a better and a more enduring one ; where the freed spirit may soar unfettered, unclouded, by fear or doubt—perfected in the bliss which has dawned upon it in its pro-

bationary state, and re-united to the dear ones it has loved on earth !

What but the enthusiasm of such feelings, of a scarcely defined, yet readily admitted and cherished sentiment, could reconcile a young, a timid girl to quitting the happy home of her infancy—her youth,—the tender care of her parents, and confide to the promises of one whose disposition and character can, at best, be but imperfectly known? What could prompt her to sacrifice the certain possession of happiness for the uncertain hope of attaining it? What could compensate for the numerous trials, sufferings, and disappointments which chequer the destiny of even the happy wife and mother? What but the undying enthusiasm of a heart which seeks for bliss, not in its own selfish enjoyments, but in the happiness, the welfare of the being it loves !

The feelings of the good old knight, still softened by the recent anguish he had undergone, were completely subdued by this appeal to them.

He pressed the weeping girl to his heart, and a tear fell on the cold, damp forehead he kissed, as with the most affectionate sympathy in his tone and look, he sought to comfort her with hopes for the future."

"I will not urge thee further," he said in conclusion, "but art thou sure, quite sure, my dear child, that this cruel sacrifice is absolutely required of thee?"

"It is!—a solemn promise to my father—a sacred vow to Heaven demand it!"

"Then have I nought more to say! but thou wilt not object that I should intercede with thy father? His wilful obduracy I can in no wise understand; 'tis cruel to blight two young existences, where no just cause can be assigned for thwarting their affections and wishes! Cheer up my Jacqueline! I will make him list to reason."

The maiden shook her head despondingly.

"Thou shalt judge for thyself," she said, drawing a letter from her bosom. Placing it open in his hands, she pointed to a few lines at

the bottom of the page, and continued—"read this postscript; the rest of the contents be known to thee—'tis the last I received from my father."

Sir Phillip read aloud:—

"Nota Bene.—There be one thing in thy late epistle which pleaseth me much, namely, a tone of proper cheerfulness which proveth thee to be no weak, romantic, love-pining damsel, but a sensible, lofty-minded being, such as Geoffry Wallis might desire to see daughter of his. Thou dost well, my Jacqueline, to conquer thy girlish fancy, for the disgraced son of a traitorous, sordid, recreant knight can be no mate for thee!—and, once more, I warn thee, dear wench, if thou dost not desire to hear thy father curse and disown thee, never let mine ear be again wearied with intercession on his behalf!—by my hope of salvation, I have sworn that whilst I live, Sir Julien de Montessy shall never be son o'mine—'twas done, I confess, in the ex-

citement of angry feeling against the father ; for against the son, justice requireth of me to say, I can urge no cause of scorn—but, it is for thee to show thy filial duty by respecting thy father's oath, and exercising the good sense with which nature hath so superabundantly gifted thee—thou wouldest not be the cause of his disquietude here, and his damnation hereafter.”

Sir Phillip threw the letter from him with a movement of indignation, and paced the chamber two or three times in silence. At length he re-seated himself beside her, and took her hand within his.

“ I would that thou wert in reality that which mine affection hath long made me consider thee, a most dear daughter, for then I might dispose of thee as my heart now desireth, but alack ! I am compelled to avow I can do nothing save sympathize with thee, my poor Jacqueline, and love and admire thee, if possible, ten times more than I have ever done, praying Heaven to comfort ye !”

“And Heaven hath already sent me comfort, dear uncle, not only in thy fatherly love and kindness, but in the sweet consciousness that the performance of a duty however bitter in the onset, never fails of bringing its own reward—were I assured that Julien de Montessy was happy, I should be so myself.”

“By the splendour of God, thou art a noble wench, my Jacqueline, and one for whom a man may well stir heaven and earth to get for wife ! I fear me thy true knight be less imbued with the spirit of philosophy than thyself, so get thee hence, and let thy pen communicate the ill tidings to him, which, by my troth, I have no heart to tell. Ye gentle ones have a twining, coaxing manner with ye, at once subtile and *doucereux*, that takes the worst sting from what be grievous, and gives the sweetest charm to what be pleasant !” and, imprinting another kiss on her pallid, but now placid brow, the good knight quitted the apartment.

Jacqueline retreated to her own chamber ; as

she did so, the accents of a voice most dearly loved reached her ear, and thrilled to the inmost recesses of her heart. She stood still, like one spell-bound, with her hands pressed on her burning temples, and listening with intense earnestness to the deep, rich tones, which would, in all probability, never greet her ear again—and when they ceased, she drew a long, deep breath, raised her hands and eyes to Heaven, and invoked its blessing on him.

CHAPTER XIII.

An hour of anguish---deep, silent, heart-searing anguish followed; leaving many a line of sorrow on her marble brow, as also traces of the slow path which many a scalding tear had taken down her pale cheeks. But Jacqueline yielded not to weakness, without a struggle to recover strength. She arose from the settle upon which she had thrown herself in the first paroxysm of despair, brushed away the tears which still hung glistening on her long, dark lashes, passed her hand over her brow, as if to smooth down the furrows grief had made, and then prostrated her-

self at her "*prie Dieu*." The glow of holy fervour gradually spread itself over her features---religious enthusiasm rekindled the fire of her large, dark eye, and resignation relaxed the contraction of her lofty brow, till her countenance finally wore its usual expression of sweet, yet proud serenity.

After quitting her *prie Dieu*, she seated herself at a table and passed two whole hours in writing: she then folded the well-filled letter, which she entwined with a delicate blue silk cord, directed to Sir Julien de Montessy, and enclosed with a few lines to her uncle, which she summoned her attendant to carry to him. The tire woman glanced admiringly on the delicate characters, and then on the pale, calm face of her mistress, as if to ascertain whether she might venture to communicate her news. Seemingly, she found nothing there to repress her loquacity, for, having prefaced her discourse with "a fear that her sweet lady was seriously ailing, as she could not, as wont, do the honors

of the Manor to the Seigneur's guests,"—she broke forth into terms of strong commendation on the personal advantages and noble bearing of the goodly young French knight, who was of the number, observing that it was no wonder he looked so worn-out and sad, seeing that she had been told, that the cruel de Brézé had made him a prisoner in foreign parts, and had brought him with him to the Isle, and kept him in chains in the Fortress. "But lawks! lady," she added, on seeing Jacqueline's emotion, "you would'nt look so aghast at this only, if I told ye but half the devilries of that wicked man! They say that the monster hath murdered or starved to death every living soul he made prisoner; and that the poor lady of Senmaresq, who died the moment she was taken into the fresh air, was the only one found alive in the dungeons, which be filled with chains and dead men's bones!—so after all, that poor dear, brave, little Jean Marie that died like a hero, be better off in his grave than he would be here, without father, mother,

brother, or sister, to cherish and console him for his infirmity ; for after all, 'tis a sad thing to be made out of the usual fashion of nature ; for say what one will, 'tis what one sees without, rather than the goodness which be within, that makes us love or hate !"—and here the simple Colette heaved a deep sigh,—“ for instance, if I were as comely to look at as Nanette, Master du Bois would not have the heart to tell me he was going back to France, without bestowing on me a word, or a look of kindness ; and that too, after all the civility I have shewn him, when he came a stranger among us ! and he is going along with the handsome young cavalier, whose follower he was in former times ! But I crave your pardon, sweet lady, I hope you will forgive my boldness ? ” she added quickly, as her mistress walked away to the window ; and thinking she had offended, she stole out of the room.

Jacqueline threw open the casement, and seating herself at it, gazed out on the glorious

sunset which gilded earth and sky with its dazzling hues. The unquiet throbbings of her heart were gradually lulled: her spirit was again raised to its lofty tone: she was again strong to *feel* and *suffer*, but conquer and smile! Lost in contemplations, which such a soul as her's only could frame, she heeded not the dark shadows which stole over the earth, nor the re-entrance of her attendant, who placed a little silver lamp on the table, and receiving no answer to her twice-repeated question, "if she might bring refreshment," once more left the room. Not long after the door re-opened, and a sylph-like form glided so noiselessly in, that it is no wonder *her* approach was unnoticed, and that her arms encircled the neck of the still-absorbed Jacqueline, ere she started from her reverie.

"Dear Margery, is it thou?" and Jacqueline returned the warm embrace with one equally warm.

"Yes, it is the third time I have come hither, but receiving no permission to enter, I feared to

intrude on thee—this is my excuse now !”—holding forth a billet. Jacqueline took it, her heart beat quicker, but her hand was steady, her manner composed. For a moment she held it, as if in suspense ; then undid the ligature and commenced reading the contents, whilst her companion watched every turn in her countenance with fond and pitying intensity. She saw the lips quiver, the bosom heave, convulsed with the sigh which was there repressed, but which would burst from the heart ; still the eyes, so long rivetted to the parchment, were tearless, although words of deep anguish and love were there traced.

With the first sigh which was suffered to escape its prison-house, Jacqueline deposited the billet before her, and resting her elbow on the sill of the window, buried her face in her hands. Margaret, from whose eyes streamed tears of pity, at thus witnessing the deep, but silent anguish of her friend, seemed once or twice on the point of speaking, as if to crave

some boon she feared might be denied. At length, in faltering, yet imploring voice, she preferred her request. Jacqueline was too much absorbed to heed her, and, without renewing it, Margaret drew forth a pair of scissors from amongst sundry other little implements of female industry which her pockets contained, and seizing one of the dark, glossy locks which shrouded the swan-like neck of her friend, she severed it with trembling haste, and was about to slide it into her bosom, when Jacqueline looked up, and said with a very unsuccessful attempt to smile,

“Thou needst not conceal thy theft, dear Margery, though I cannot divine why thou shouldst have stolen that which a simple request would have procured thee.”

“And if I tell, dear friend, wilt thou promise not to be angry nor forbid me? ’Tis not for myself—’tis—ah, forgive me!—he is so wretched!—he loveth thee so sincerely.”

The crimson tide rushed over the eloquent

brow of the Norman maiden; she averted her head, but replied not. Margaret pressed her lips to the hand she had in her earnestness taken, then hurried from the room as if afraid her treasure might yet be taken from her.

Jacqueline looked after, and stretched forth her arm as if to stop her—she could not speak, and Margaret had disappeared ere she reached the door. “Be it so,” she murmured. “Dear Julien! why should I deny thee so poor a boon, sith we may never, never meet again! Oh! what a world of anguish that single sentence breathes—*‘Never meet again!’* He leaves to-morrow, and for distant climes! May they not prove his grave, as they have that of thousands?” She raised the parchment to her lips, and imprinted on it one long fervent kiss; then re-perused its contents, which ran thus:—

“Thou wishest that the heart had its limits; that it could only love and suffer for a season,

and, phoenix-like, soar from the flames unscathed ! And for my sake thou wishest it !—that I might cease to love thee, and be happy with another ! Recall the wish, my Jacqueline, thy heart could not frame, thy reason could not approve it ! No ; I tell thee, no !—there are no bounds, no limits for the feelings which have once expanded to a passion such as mine.—To love thee is the charm of life, to deplore the fate which severs us, yet to know thy heart is with me, is sweeter bliss than could bring smiles from a thousand beautiful, yet less beautiful lips than those of Jacqueline. To mourn thy absence is the luxury of woe,—to teach my heart to forget thee would be the bitterness of death ! Thou lovest me !—thou hast *spoken*—*written* it ! That little sentence will be to my lonely, wearied spirit, what the oasis in the burning desert is to the toil-worn, thirsty traveller---a green, sunny spot on which to repose and inhale new vigour to buffet with the hardships of a pilgrimage yet unfinished. Farewell,

beloved one. Ere another sun hath set, I shall be traversing the ocean, which is again to divide me from all earth has worth living for. Farewell! Why should I tarry here!---'tis but an aggravation of my misery, a refinement of cruelty to dwell beneath the same roof, breathe the same air, yet neither gaze on thy sweet face nor hear the music of thy soft voice. Farewell! Be thou as faithful in thy love to me, as thou art uncompromising in the performance of thy duties to thy Heavenly and thy earthly father.

“On reaching France, it is my purpose to carry my arms and my misery to the Holy Land. If I should not there find a term to both, I will return to thy blessed Isle, and mayhap, fate, wearied with persecuting me, and Heaven, touched by my long-enduring sorrow, will relent, and bestow the only boon that can cheer the heart of thy devoted and unhappy

“JULIEN DE MONTESSY.”

“Again, farewell!--farewell!”

“ Farewell ! and all good angels watch over thee ! noblest, dearest, best ! ” exclaimed Jacqueline, with a burst of passionate energy, raising her streaming eyes and clasped hands to the starry Heavens.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE least bold and rocky, though not the least beautiful of the bays in the Island of Jersey, is that of St. Aubin's, where, on the morning succeeding the evacuation of the Fortress, a little galley (her white sails spread and gay pennon flying) rides lightly on the clear blue surface of the sea ; a group of cavaliers stand on the rude pier, waving their last adieu to Sir Julien de Montessy and his faithful esquire. The anchor is weighed, the sails flutter in the fresh morning breeze, and the little barque cuts rapidly through the treacherous element, whose

unruffled bosom and alluring mien at this moment might divest the mind of the most timid voyager of all apprehension ; it rounds a projecting reef of rocks, and then is lost to view. Edward de Carteret hemmed away a sigh, and passed his arm within that of the Seigneur of Anneville, a sad, a dissatisfied expression clouded his usually joyous, open-hearted countenance—for the first time in his life, he was thoroughly out of humour with his fair cousin Jacqueline, and the world at large ; and bitter were the complaints and regrets he poured out to his friend as they walked homeward. As to the good Sir Phillip, who, as well as the Admiral, had paid the young cavalier the compliment of escorting him to the place of embarkation, he brushed a tear from his eye as he thought of his dear niece, and remembered that but for the interference of the gallant stranger of whom he had just taken leave, he should at that moment be childless. But the Seigneur of St. Ouen did not mean to limit his gratitude to vain

regrets, and equally vain good wishes ; he had resolved to espouse the cause of Julien de Montessy as warmly as he would have done that of his own son, and if he could not reason, to *shame* his brother-in-law, Geoffry Wallis, out of his obdurate opposition to his daughter's marriage with him. Sanguine of ultimately carrying his point, he had obtained a promise from Sir Julien not to set out upon his intended expedition to the Holy Land, till the lapse of a year ; and even then, not without having first apprized and consulted him. De Montessy had given this promise, though with the manner of one who feels confident that the measure to which he assents can be productive of no beneficial result ! In short, he knew the temper of Geoffry Wallis better than did his brother-in-law, Sir Phillip de Carteret ; he knew that the pride which had engendered a wilful stubbornness of character, which, like many other men of limited capacities, he mistook for firmness of soul and independence of character, was too in-

herent a part of his nature to yield to the claims of gratitude, even where the service had been rendered to himself; he consequently anticipated little good from Sir Phillip de Carteret's intercession in his behalf, as the preserver of the young hero of St. Ouen.

If hope deferred makes the heart sick, it also ends by making it incredulous and even impervious to every feeling save despair; and thus it was with the ill-fated Julien de Montessy! Neither the promises nor the hearty encouragement of the worthy Seigneur of St. Ouen inspired him with one sanguine thought for the future. He had rested his hopes, not on the chance of softening the heart of the proud, selfish Geoffry Wallis, but on the possibility of winning the consent of Jacqueline to a secret union. This hope had failed him like the rest, and he was now a bankrupt indeed!

Sir Phillip de Carteret had, it may be remembered, vowed a pilgrimage to the shrine of "Notre Dame de Boulogne," and it was his in-

tention to set off on it the moment his son's marriage had taken place, and that public matters were restored to their old footing in his native Islè. If, as he had certainly good reason to expect, King Edward confirmed him in his present high post, he proposed obtaining the royal sanction to his journey, and leaving his son to act as his deputy during his absence.

This pilgrimage to Boulogne, he considered his first and paramount duty, and having performed it, he intended passing over to England to obtain an interview with Geoffry Wallis, should the letter he meant to forward by Admiral Harleston, and the personal intercession the latter had offered to make, not produce the desired effect. To these plans, the mind of the worthy knight now reverted with a confidence of success, that dispelled the momentary depression of spirits which the departure of the gallant young de Montessy had occasioned ; and the joyous, bustling preparations which ensued, banished him for a time altogether from his memory.

A *Te Deum* and high mass were to be performed in all the churches to return thanks to the Almighty, for the joyful victory the Islanders had obtained over their enemies—nor was this all—preparations must be made for celebrating the marriage of Edward and Margaret on the following day, as the Admiral was desirous of its taking place previous to his return to England, and he could only delay his departure two days longer at furthest. With all these inciting objects before them, it is scarce to be wondered that Sir Julien de Montessy engrossed the heart and thoughts of but one individual at the Manor of St. Ouen—that one, need we say, was Jacqueline—alas! alas! for human hopes, human foresight—poor Jacqueline—whilst thou gazest out on the pure, calm moonlight, and gratulatest thyself that it should shine thus brightly on the loved traveller, thoughts of whom have kept thy aching head from resting on its pillow; shall we follow the little bark that bears him from thee? Retarded by a calm, it

lingers within sight of the Island till the fall of twilight, seemingly, reluctant to bear the unhappy young knight from the vicinity of all he loved on earth!—with the rising moon a gentle breeze springs up and bears it steadily on its course—Sir Julien keeps his post at the stern, still straining his eyes towards the land, and de Verre, who, with intuitive delicacy, has forbore to intrude on his notice, wraps his *houpe-lande* around him, and stretches himself on the deck; two or three of the mariners follow his example, and others retire to their hammocks below. Sir Julien and the helmsman are the only moving figures on deck—a stillness, in perfect harmony with the placid beauty of the night, reigns around them, yet they glide calmly and unsuspectingly on to their destruction! The tardy warning comes too late---“*l'Ecreheau ! l'Ecreheau !*”*---the hapless bark is drawn into the

* “*L'Ecreheau*” is a frightful reef of rocks lying between the Island of Jersey and Cherbourg, on which, many a hapless bark still, unsuspectingly, meets destruction—and which has witnessed the death struggle of many a fearless mariner.

counter current. Once, twice, thrice, she strikes upon the reef!---her sides are rent---the waters rush in and awake the sleepers below! "The boat! the boat!" is now the spontaneous shout, but, ere the boat can be lowered, another rush of waters is heard---the mast groans heavily---the timbers creak---down, down she sinks---a cry, a gurgle---all is still!---the circling waves have smoothed their furrows---the deep has claimed its prey!

CHAPTER XV.

It was now the month of roses, and in no quarter of the globe could the vernal prime of nature offer an aspect more smiling---no where could the luxuriant month of June unfold its pomp to more advantage than in the lovely Isle of Jersey. The graceful undulations of its hills, the rich verdure of its champagne, intersected with innumerable wood embowered roads, peaceful valleys, mimic glens, flowering banks, and tasteful gardens, contrasting so forcibly with the bold rocky outlines of the coast, girt round by the ocean as by an emerald zone---its

pure Italian sky---its balmy breezes ! all reunite to form a glowing landscape, on which the eye might love to feast for ever ! It might indeed almost dispute the palm with Nisida---the smiling Nisida, which poets have apostrophized as a lovely nymph metamorphosed by the Gods into a sunny Isle.

Never had the sun shone out so brightly---never had the immensity of space, the eternal heavens shrouded themselves with a curtain of purer blue---never had the flowers decked themselves with such gorgeous pomp, or exhaled such sweet perfume---never had nature put forth such perfect loveliness; such sights and sounds of blissful harmony, as on the joyous morn which beheld the young heir of St. Ouen and his still more youthful bride kneeling at the altar, and pronouncing the sacred vow “to love and cherish each other till *death doth part*,” with unaffected and solemn earnestness ! How purely beautiful ; how full of innocent happiness is the lovely face of the maiden, as quitting the

altar, she sinks with timid joy into the arms stretched out to embrace her, and with glowing brow and throbbing heart, hears the first impassioned whisper of the joyous Edward---“My own, my wife!” . . . But others stand around to claim a kiss, to breathe a prayer for the happiness of the youthful bride--and the fitful, blushing smile passes from her rosy lip, a bright tear trembles ere it quits her clear, dove-like eye, as she sees the venerable cheeks of her father suffused with the big, round drops, which have, unbidden, stolen down them.

“May God for ever bless thee, dearest, best!” murmured the old Admiral, straining her to his breast, as she threw her snowy arms around his neck, with the one tender word “*Father,*” and pressed her warm balmy lips to his: “God for ever bless thee,” he repeated, “mayest thou ever be as happy as thou deservest---as thy doating old father would have thee be!” Margaret lingered yet a moment on her parent’s breast, as though reluctant to quit it---was she

held there by the sudden recollection that on the morrow his duties would call him away ?--- or was she influenced by that vague, undefinable feeling, which in the very moment her proud dream of happiness is realized, springs up in the heart of the sensitive bride, and sends the warm tears gushing from the laughing eyes, and makes her cling almost with fear to the sweet home of her infancy---to the indulgent authors of her being ? What marvel ! 'Tis a sure, a tranquil haven she is about to quit, and however sunny to the view be the one to which she is about to confide, it is alas ! at the best, uncertain whether she will there find a safe, a peaceful anchorage, or hidden shoals on which to struggle for awhile, and finally make wreck ! Yet why so sad a digression ? Sweet Margery ! thou at least, in this respect, hast nought to fear, and, well may smiles revisit thy blushing cheek, and gladness dance in thy glistening eye, as transferred from the arms of thy doating old father to those of the newly acquired parent, who loves

thee well—thou receivest his honest, heart-felt blessing—then the fond embrace of thy friend Jacqueline—yea, well mayest thou smile ; few of earth's weary pilgrims have seen so sunny a vista spread out before them ! Yet, even thou hast cause to be thankful that the book of futurity hath been sealed by the hand of Omnipotence ! that it is impervious to mortal eye !—for, was the page allotted to thee, at this very moment submitted to thy scrutiny, thou mightest read therein, that which would cloud thy radiant brow, and quell the throbbings of thy joyous heart. A sealed volume may it long remain to thee ! we, at least, will not anticipate its opening ; so return we to the sacred fane, where there is *one* who stands somewhat apart ; *one* who deserves not to be thrown into the shade—it is the Seigneur of Anneville. His brow and cheeks are more pale than wont, but a benevolent smile lights up his features. Estimable d'Anneville ! he has obtained a victory of which he may well be proud !—he has stood by, and seen

the happiness he, once, so ardently coveted for himself, bestowed on another—he has smiled to see that other's joy, and prayed for its continuance; nor has one dark feeling sullied his generous heart!

There are doubtless many minds capable of making wise resolutions and generous sacrifices upon the spur of powerful excitement—but there are few, who, like d'Anneville, can boast of a mind so well organized as to render those resolutions, that sacrifice, more than an act of evanescent generosity! The resolution is formed, the sacrifice is made with energy, with cheerfulness—but alas! one by one, dark clouds regather around the heart—the resolution is perhaps maintained—but how?—as an insufferable hardship! Not so with Julien d'Anneville; he feels that he has triumphed over the weakness of his nature; he feels that he is appreciated, confided in by those whose esteem and good-opinion he values, and the satisfaction of his upright mind beams quietly from his dark-speaking

eye—he grasps the hand of the bridegroom, and next obeys the laughing, but positive command of the merry Sir Phillip, to kiss the cheek of the bride, instead of the little snowy hand he has raised so respectfully to his lips ! And now, let us hasten on to the merry animated scene without. The church doors are thrown open and the young heir of St. Ouen leads forth his bride. A cheering, happy shout greets them from the assembled peasantry ; who, arrayed in their holiday gear, await their re-appearance. A number of young girls stand around the porch, decked out in their very smartest attire, with the addition of various coloured knots of ribbon and carefully selected posies ; each of them held either a garland or a basket of flowers, and ere the gentle bride passed the porch, the ground was strewed with the blooming and fragrant produce of many a neighbouring hedge and garden. Margaret stept lightly over them, as though loathe to crush the beauteous things she idolized, and blushing and confused hurried along to reach

her palfrey, half smiling, half trembling at the earnest gaze, at the joyous exclamations of the honest but unpolished Islanders. Edward pressed her arm closer to his side, and tried to repress her eagerness ; his ear loved to drink in those sounds of mirth, and his eye delighted to note the admiring gaze his bride attracted from his father's faithful retainers. Jacqueline followed the young couple, leaning on the arm of d'Anneville, and last, came the Seigneur of St. Ouen and his good friend, the Admiral, who were greeted by another deafening shout of applause.

Margaret, glad to find the embarrassing attention of the little assembly in some measure called off from herself, sprung lightly upon her palfrey. As to Edward, his glad spirit could brook no control ; his merry blue eye danced from one object to another, as if it would fain glean and impart a fresh stimulus to joyousness. He snatched a garland of pure white roses, interspersed with myrtle, from the hand of a pretty young damsel who was approaching to offer it,

and placing it on the brow of his bride, "it is the emblem of thy beauty and my love," he whispered. Margaret, with a smile, half playful, half reproving, removed the fragrant coronet and suspended it on her arm, and with an imploring look, as she saw the throng again pressing forward, urged her wish to set forth.

Edward vaulted into the saddle, and detaching a well-filled purse from his girdle, he scattered the contents around him, crying, "*à largesse, à largesse.*" Taking advantage of the scramble thus produced, the bridal party rode gaily off, nor were they overtaken by the rejoicing rustics, till they entered the hospitable old mansion, over which Margaret was henceforth to preside, and where she was so touchingly, so affectionately installed by the good old knight, so fondly welcomed by the happy Edward and the eloquent Jacqueline; the latter, on a day so replete with happiness to those she loved, permitted no sad thought of her own less happy lot or that of the dear one who was

exiled from her presence, to sadden her countenance, however it might and *did* her heart.

At the usual early dinner-hour of twelve, full a dozen lengthy tables groaned beneath their smoking burdens; half of these were placed in the open air, for the retainers and their families; those within were appropriated to personal friends and the small land-holders on the joint feifs of the Seigneur and his brother-in-law. The company poured in, like a noisy torrent; the first-arrived of the guests was Dame Melêche and her daughters, whose awkward smiles of congratulation sat as ungracefully upon their faces, as their flaunting gear did upon their persons. Next trundled in the Bailli and his better-half, and if his warm congratulations were quaint and somewhat startling, (for he caught the bride in his arms, imprinting an audible kiss on both cheeks, and next hugged Edward,) they nevertheless had the merit of honest sincerity. Then followed the stately Seigneur of Trinity, the sarcastic and jocose de

Rozel, with their dames and daughters ; but enough . . . The self-important “major domo,” puffing and bustling, hot and steaming as the dishes he has been placing with such dexterity on his over-loaded tables, announces that the repast waits to be tasted and approved. A scene of festivity and feasting followed, which it would be tedious to describe ; suffice it, that not till the chime of midnight rang its solemn peal, did the jest, the dance, and the merry music cease in the halls of the brave, the hospitable Seigneur of St. Ouen.

CHAPTER XVI.

The sounds of boisterous mirth and festivity have at length ceased at the Manor, but the radiant smiles of joy have not passed from the happy faces of the youthful pair, nor the quiet expression of happiness, thankfulness, and content, from the brow of the worthy Seigneur of St. Ouen. A fortnight has sobered down the hilarity, the effervescence of spirits, which for awhile pervaded every member of the household, and put an end to the feasting, dancing, and merry-making which have, day after day, succeeded to each other. Margaret and Edward

are thankful that it is so ; they are too completely happy to need outward demonstrations of pleasure, to make them feel or enjoy their bliss; and they long to enter upon the calm and rational routine of life which they have so judiciously planned. As to Sir Phillip, neither joy nor sorrow have power to damp the energies of his active mind, or make him slacken in the path of duty and usefulness.

Still acting *pro tempore* as Governor of the Island, till confirmed or superseded in his office by the patent of King Edward, his first care was to restore order and prosperity amongst the Islanders. The deserted parishes re-welcomed back their former inhabitants, to sacked houses, unstored granaries, and cropless lands, it is true, but the generosity and judicious arrangements of the good knight, assisted by his brother-fiefholders, and particularly by the liberal Seigneur of Trinité, soon changed the cheerless prospect of the returned outcasts to sunshine. By a voluntary advance of money and stores, and by

levying contributions, in proportion to their capabilities, on all who had not suffered loss of property during the late glorious struggle for their King and privileges, he was enabled to assist and indemnify those who had. To the poor he gave—to those who could hereafter by the produce of their lands repay, he lent—all admired his wisdom—all blessed his name—save one dark, grovelling, revengeful spirit—save one cold-blooded, malicious villain, who had once tasted of his bounties, and only smarted beneath his displeasure, because he had outraged the laws of God and man—*he*—he lies hidden in his safe retreat, nursing his diabolical project for revenge, waiting but the favourable moment to inflict it, and carry death and sorrow to the hearth which is now encircled by a loving, smiling, grateful group; each happy in the happiness of the other; blessing God as the giver and each other as the medium of their unspeakable bliss! And must—must the bright picture so soon be darkened?—must the gay sounds and

sights of bridal festivities ; the nuptial wreaths ; gay attire ; the merry strains of music ; the joyous acclamations ; the rosy smiles ;—must they all so soon yield place to cypress wreaths—to shrouds—to darkness—stillness—tears ? Even so—such is the page of life ! Turn over the thick volume of human destinies since the world began (the fallen world) and though you may here and there see a name inscribed on a *rosy leaf*,—what thousands—millions will you find traced on *black* or *chequered ones* ! And yet comparatively speaking, how little do we value happiness whilst it rests with us ; the present, the despised present is overlooked in eager hopes and schemes for the future !—that mysterious, uncertain future, which may never arrive ! Even the happy group whose destinies we trace were not altogether free from this common frailty of our nature. Edward and his bride had sketched a glowing picture for the future ; sweet, homely duties, varied with innocent recreations, hospitality to friends, and beneficence

to the poor. Such were the fair colours with which their pencil decked the canvass. Their proud, happy sire anticipated the delight of once more hearing the joyous prattle of infancy within his goodly mansion ; he already, in fancy, saw his little rosy grand-children climbing his knees, entwining his neck with dimpled arms, and nestling their chubby cheeks close to his, coaxing for a new toy or some tempting sweetmeat. Then again, he would lay plans for each and all ! His brother Geoffry had interest at court to push the youngsters forward. A long line of heroes and statesmen forthwith sprung up in his imagination to perpetuate his ancient name ! And Jacqueline !—the high-minded, calmly suffering Jacqueline, who smiled in the midst of her heart's heaviness to behold the happiness which encircled her—did she not look beyond the painful present to a bright future ? Yes, for Julien's sake she did ! she had persuaded herself that he would be happy, simply because her heart told her he deserved to be

so ! Thus, hope imperceptibly lent its aid to the sweet satisfaction of doing right, and supported her nobly in the path of duty—poor Jacqueline !—thy trials are not yet ended—sorrow is near at hand for all ! It is this consciousness which has prompted our pen to pass somewhat rapidly over the scenes of joy which followed the union of two young, virtuous, and devoted hearts ; lest, dwelling too long upon it, a reluctance to the painful task which follows, should make the hand which guides that pen shrink from recording the cruel reverse of fate—and now proceed we.

It is a bright sunny morn ; warm and balmy as a cloudless sky in June, and a flower-decked earth could make it. Edward and Margaret are standing hand in hand under the porch, talking to the knight as he mounts his steed. A blush has mantled on the cheek of the young bride at some lively jest from her father-in-law, but a happy smile plays over her face as he lays his riding whip gently across her shoulders, and

then with an affectionate “ God bless thee sweet one,” gallops off.

“ I knew he would love thee tenderly !” exclaimed Edward, entwining an arm round the slender form of his wife, and with the other repressing the somewhat boisterous caresses of two pet greyhounds “ And all must love thee,” he continued, fondly, “ and bless the day that brought thee to our shores ! Say, my Margery, art thou sure, quite sure, thou wilt be content to tarry ever, in so humble, so remote a corner of the globe ?”

The answer of the happy wife, may easily be divined, so we pause not to give it, but follow the joyous knight on his way. He had ridden scarce a quarter of a mile from the Manor, when he espied La Blanche Vêtue directing her course towards it ; he reined in his horse, cordially giving her the ‘ good morrow !’ and ere the old woman could reply to his greeting, he added :

“ Glad am I to see ye on your way to my

Manor at last, La Blanche ; better late than never ! I was somewhat contraried that ye had not thought proper to come with your good wishes upon an occasion that demanded them ; ye are never backward with your word of good advice, when troubles be at hand, why should ye be with your word of greeting when joy and triumph sit at my hearth ?”

“ St. Ouen,” said La Blanche, “ if I have not darkened thy threshold, ’t was from no lack of good will to thee or thine ; La Blanche is not fit guest at bridal revelry ; her presence and her words could bring no joy no blessing there.”

A sadness, or rather, soberness, marked the voice of this strange woman, so much at variance with her usual demeanour, that Sir Phillip could scarce credit the evidence of his senses.

“ Poor thing !” he said, mentally, “ it be one of her lucid intervals !” then addressing her, continued : “ Well, well, good mother, that’s as may be ; but wert thou not on thy way thither

when I accosted thee? The honey-moon's not yet spent, and the fragments of feasting not yet dispersed."

"And what o' that?" exclaimed La Blanche, with somewhat of her wonted wildness of manner,—“thinkest thou idle festivities have power to allure me? I tell thee nay, St. Ouen, where mirth and pleasure reign, there come I not; with them La Blanche has nought to do—alack! my voice would frighten them from their haunts. Eyes that have gazed on horrors such as mine have seen, could not look on sights of joy without shedding tears of blood. Ears that have heard sounds of agony such as mine have heard, could not list to the voice of mirth without the brain maddening—the heart cursing! Nay, nay, my presence at bridal board could bode no good!”

“In God's name, then, wherefore do ye now come?”

“I come, St. Ouen, not to bid thee be merry in thy heart's contentment, but, alack! to prove

that I am but a poor grovelling worm, like the rest, sowing where I expect to reap."

"Then speak out, good mother," said Sir Phillip, at once mollified, and taking the velvet purse, which was suspended beside his dagger, from his leathern girdle; "this be but a poor reward for thy past good offices; so speak out, and ye shall find that happiness hath neither closed my hand nor my heart."

"First replace that bauble with its dross!" exclaimed La Blanche, contemptuously waving her arm; "'tis not thy gold I crave, St. Ouen. And now answer me. Have I ever done ye or yours such good service as may authorize me to claim thy protection for myself, or, for such person as I may think fit, whether they be kith or kin, friend, foe or stranger, and under any and every circumstance or chance?"

"By my troth hast thou, La Blanche!" was the prompt reply.

"Well, then, St. Ouen, I ask some token, which, when produced, shall claim from thee

or thine the fulfilment of this promise, namely, to defend to the utmost whomsoever shall possess it?"

Sir Phillip drew a signet ring from his finger and presented it to his strange companion. "On the word of a belted knight," he said, "I promise to succour, help, and defend whomsoever shall give or send this token to me, and to cause the same promise to be given by every member of my family!"

"La Blanche took the ring; a wild expression of satisfaction passed over her withered features. "They may and they may not need it," she murmured; "they have cleared the coast in safety—yet it is well to provide against evil chances." As she thus communed with herself, Sir Phillip, thinking she had sunk into one of her moody reveries, was about to depart, when, raising her head, she abruptly seized his horse's bridle: "I have not done with thee yet," she exclaimed. "I came hither to seek thee on a matter of deeper moment than even

the one I have named. St. Ouen, thou must turn back thy horse's head to the Manor, and there must thou keep thyself in seclusion, till such times thy officials have searched every dwelling, and purged the Isle of all who wish thee ill ; thy foes, mark me, be not all vanquished !”

“ Now, out upon thee for a witch, if witch thou be—wouldst conjure up another horde of Escorceurs to mar our peace and destroy our felicity? God wot, thou wouldst have done well to spare us sight of thee still longer, sith thou wouldst draw a black curtain over the smiling picture of the future !”

“ St. Ouen,” resumed La Blanche in a voice almost of entreaty, “ if thou wouldst not thyself mar that felicity, I adjure thee, turn back. Thou art threatened with a violent death, or I have studied the stars in vain ! A more deadly opposition mine eyes never gazed upon. Mars—”

“ Opposition !—stars !—Mars !— the devil !” burst forth Sir Phillip, irritated beyond measure

at the cabalistical phrases he detested. "What in the name of the foul fiend have they to do with an orthodox Christian, as I pray God I be? Prithee, release my horse's bridle and go consult thy informants anew. When they have imparted more likely tidings thou mayest retail them." Thus saying, he backed his horse a few paces, and giving him the spur, set off at a hard gallop.

La Blanche looked mournfully after him. "I knew 'twould be thus!" she exclaimed; "I knew he would scoff at my words; nevertheless, they be written in the book of fate!"

CHAPTER XVII.

IT was about mid-day that Sir Phillip de Carteret, his heart glowing with honest pride, journeyed homeward, after having held a *cour d'assis*, at which he had proposed and carried measures for the public weal, which had called forth the most enthusiastic demonstrations of approbation. Yes, his very heart had drunk in the murmur of applause, the low-breathed blessing which every where greeted his approach! He *felt* that he had deserved well of his countrymen, and the unequivocal testimony of their gratitude and affection, which every where

met him, was a bright reward, to which he could not be insensible. It was not the pride of the victorious hero, the successful politician, that swelled his heart with triumph!—no! t'was the warm honest glow of the Christian, the philanthropist; that pure, that only excusable pride, in man—that pride which arises from the bright consciousness of having done towards others as he would be done by. Upon this maxim had the good knight throughout his useful life invariably acted. Rather than injure a fellow being by word or deed, he would have cut off his right hand and thrust it from him. To do good was with him a necessity; to see others happy, so real a satisfaction, that the exercise of benevolence was scarcely less necessary to him than the pure breath of Heaven.

As he quitted the parishes whose demolished fences and unsightly fields attested the ravages of the lawless band to whom they had been delivered up, and entered those which, thanks to his own perseverance and activity, had, in

their proper season received the labours of the husbandman, and now put forth a promise of more luxuriant crops than, with all its richness and fertility, the earth had ever before nourished in its generous bosom, the heart of the good knight opened to a new source of joy and gratitude. It seemed to him, that in thus doubly blessing and multiplying the produce of the ground, God had given token of his approbation and special favour in their just cause, not less than in the signal and almost miraculous deliverance from their foes. In this soothing frame of mind he arrived in front of the little Calvary to which we have, on a former occasion, alluded.

Uncovering his noble and partially bald head with an expression of deep humility, he dismounted; approached the sacred shrine and rendered thanks to the beneficent Being, whose succour he had, a few months before, on the same spot implored. Whilst he thus yields to the pious impulse of his soul, and kneels at the foot of the rustic altar, which, in the midst of

nature's sweet silence and solitude, rears its holy head to heaven, the dark figure of a monk suddenly presents itself, seen through an opening in the thick enclosure of a high embankment on the opposite side of the road. He gazed for a moment on the noble frame thus humbly bowed at the footstool of the *King of Kings*. A malignant expression of hate and scorn gathered on his saturnine brow ; he drew a cross-bow from beneath his ample garment, raised it to its proper level, and prepared to take aim—his hand trembled—a change came over his hardened features—the weapon sunk by his side as though his arm had no longer strength to uphold it.

“Curse it, not there!” he muttered, and glided noiselessly on ; rounding the sharp angle of the enclosure, he took up a new position facing the road through which Sir Phillip must unavoidably pass. Again his countenance darkens with an expression of fiendish determination—his brow knits, his teeth clench, his eyes roll restlessly about—but his arm is steady. The

slow tramp of a horse is heard—he peeps through the enclosure—the knight is rounding the angle—a moment more, the horse’s head is directed to the fatal spot—another, and he will be on a line with it !

“ Now ! ”—he mutters through his clenched teeth—and the bow is raised—another steady look—a little higher the arbalist and off darts the arrow—he follows it with his eye—the aim was unerring. It lodged in the back part of Sir Phillip’s neck, just where the velvet robe terminated, and left the throat exposed.

“ That will do thy work, or I’m not Roger le Boutillier ! ” exclaimed the wretch, throwing down the arbalist and darting off with the speed of lightning, he once more rounded the angle ; squeezed his spare form through the opening in the fence opposite the Calvary ; glided down the steep embankment ; crossed the road, and was lost to view in the zig-zag windings of another woody lane. Not for a moment did he slacken his pace, till he gained the town, and finally the

shelter of "The Knight and the Dragon." He entered the hostelry by a back door, and hurried up to his hiding place, where he found mine host awaiting him with a complete change of attire—a wig, and a beard of tremendous length. Roger threw off his holy garb, placed a bag well filled with crown pieces on the table, slapped the host on the shoulder, with a profane oath, proclaiming that the deed was done! To this announcement his avaricious companion replied but by a satisfied motion of the head, then betook him to telling over the contents of the bag. Roger, meanwhile, put on the disguise prepared for him, adjusted the wig, and fastened on the beard with the skill of a mountebank, then exclaimed "Ho! mine host, am I a proper man now, eh?"

"*Sacré bleu!* art thou, as quaint and as ugly looking a juggler as ever mine eyes fell upon—but, good Master Roger, there lack three pieces of the thirty promised to my dame; she will not relish a deficiency, trust me!—Roger smiled

grimly, drew three other pieces from his leathern pouch, and threw them on the table.

“There they be then, though thine eyes must have grown dizzy with telling o’er thy treasure and must have miscounted, for, I can swear thou hadst thy compliment, both for thyself and thy dame,—but enough of the dross—be the boat ready?”

“Aye, ready and waiting for the last hour; thou wilt find Pigault at the place appointed, I left him but a few minutes ago, for I thought it best to take a peep at him, lest he should grow impatient at the over long delay.”

“Thou didst well; there’s an extra crown for thy extra caution! we’ve managed the job neatly mine host—if we could but have had a little sport with the young one too—but n’importe, Rome wasn’t built in a day; *son heure viendra*. And now, bid me ‘God speed’ mine gossip—if thou ever seest me again, trust me, ’twill not be as poor Roger le Boutillier, but as a belted knight, when, if thou hast proved faithful to thy oath and not blabbed, thou shalt reap yet richer

guerdon—if thou hast been unfaithful, I promise thee, my sword shall push thy perjury down thy throat—thou knowest *I never promise* in vain.”

“Thou shalt do it, and with my permission too, Master Roger, so, God speed ye!” replied mine host, and thus these worthies parted;—Roger to embark in the fishing boat which bears him safely over to Coutance, and there leaves him to follow his successful fortunes; and mine host of “The Knight and the Dragon” to return to some guests below; join in the conversation, and seemingly, participate in the rejoicings for the late merciful deliverance from their foes, quaffing two successive bumpers to the gracious “King Edward” and the “brave Seigneur of St. Ouen!” And what meanwhile, has become of the generous, the dauntless knight? On receiving the deadly wound, his hand spontaneously moved to his dagger; he turned quickly round in his saddle, but no human being was in sight. He drew out the arrow, threw it from him, and applied his kerchief to the wound,—

'twas but the work of a minute. He then threw himself off his horse, and judging that the aim could have come but from some one concealed behind the enclosure at the bottom of the road, he climbed up the embankment, cut a passage through the fence, and stood in the field. Still no one was to be seen. He beat the bushes and looked up into the branches of several stately lime trees, but all to no purpose. At length, his eye fell upon the arbalist; he took it up, and on examining, found, that it did not in the slightest degree differ from those used by the Islanders. With a conviction that he had received a random shot from some one of the serfs on his own domain, who, terrified at what he had done, had, in dismay, dropped the weapon and taken to flight.—Sir Phillip made his way out of the field, and remounted. The smarting pain of the wound induced him to accelerate the pace of his steed, but, on arriving at the manor, he only mentioned the accident which had befallen him in the light which he so unsuspect-

ously regarded it, and Margaret taking upon herself the duties of a nurse, was soon busied in preparing such appliances as were deemed efficacious for wounds of this sort, and though she remarked it had a very angry appearance, the knight made so light of the matter, that all took their places at the evening board, without any feeling of depression or misgiving, and the repast was gone through with little lack of its usual cheerfulness : yet, the worthy Seigneur, though he smiled, jested, and laughed as wont, and made others laugh too (for fashion did not then, as now, repress the exhibition of feeling whether joyous or sorrowful!) seemed to have little relish for the good things set before him. He insensibly grew restless, then a heavy weight pressed upon his spirits which he struggled in vain to shake off ; he glanced towards the now deserted harp, which occupied a corner of the spacious apartment, and observed that it was a pity the young minstrel, du Bois, had not tarried to add to their mirth by his skilful minstrelsy—an ob-

servation, which was wound up with a request that Margaret would sing him one of her merry roundelays.

The young bride cheerfully assented, and the lute being placed in her hand by Edward, the silence of the spacious hall was only broken by the clear, bird-like tones of her voice. Sir Phillip for a while entered into the spirit of her song, beating time with his foot and nodding approval ; suddenly, a deadly palor spread over his features, a cold perspiration bedewed his brow ; the sweet voice of the singer sounded harsh and unnatural in his ear, the objects in the room seemed swimming before his eyes, a cold shiver passed through his frame followed by a feeling of sickness and suffocation. He arose from his seat with a painful effort, and quitted the hall thinking to derive relief from a freer current of air. Petit Jean, who had alone marked the striking changes that had passed over his master's features, followed him with so little noise as not to be observed.

Margaret finished her song, and at her husband's request was about to begin another, when Petit Jean returned, evidently much agitated, and whispered a few words in Edward's ear. The young man started, and with a troubled look followed him from the hall. A moment after, all was bustle and consternation;—the knight was carried to his bed in strong convulsions, and a messenger was dispatched to bring Father Nicholas to the Manor. The affectionate entreaties of Jacqueline and Margaret to be admitted to the chamber of the sufferer, were not granted, and every groan which issued from him found an echo in their hearts. They stood at the door unable to tear themselves away, a cruel presentiment of evil bowed their spirits to the earth;—there they stood and listened, motionless and pale as marble statues. During a brief cessation of the soul-harrowing sounds which proceeded from within, a howl, long, dismal, and thrilling, broke through the stillness—a second—a third: and

all was again silent. The hearts of the listeners sickened almost to fainting; they crossed their breasts and foreheads and sunk upon their knees. There they remained, bowed to the earth, till the approach of footsteps announced the arrival of Father Nicholas. The menial who conducted him whispered, as she passed, in a voice husky with terror and superstition, that the mastiff of poor old Runa had just expired.

Father Nicholas had been but scarce a couple of minutes shut up in the chamber where death was already stalking, when Edward rushed out, pale, trembling, and aghast with terror, exclaiming:—

“’Tis too true! Holy Virgin!—but too true!”

“What! In Heaven’s name, tell us what!” gasped the affrighted listeners.

“There be no use in disguising it, ye *must* soon know the horrid truth,” exclaimed Edward, with the wildness of despair; “my dear father—” he could not proceed—two piteous faces gazed

with agonizing intensity up into his, but the silence remained unbroken, till, drawing a long breath, and speaking rapidly, though in a tone so low that it would seem he feared the walls might echo the words, he added—"has been wounded, with a poisoned arrow !" Thus saying, he burst from them and descended to the hall ; the menials, terrified at his wild looks, crowded round him ; they listened breathlessly to his incoherent announcement, and when it was made, one spontaneous, loud lament, rang through the hall.

Poor Edward with difficulty mastered his voice to give the orders he deemed necessary, a messenger was sent in quest of the Seigneur of Anneville, others were dispatched to convey strict commands to the public authorities in each parish, that no vessel or boat should quit the Island, and that every house, every locality, should be searched. Whilst some of the domestics flew to obey these orders, others sank on their knees to pray for the recovery of their

revered Seigneur, or huddled together like frightened sheep, discoursing in mysterious whispers, and vainly trying to conjecture who could have been guilty of so foul an act towards so good a master, but their surmises ended, as did the search after the murderer, in bewilderment and mystery. Roger's plans had been too skilfully laid !

Tedious and mournful was this awful night to the inhabitants of the Manor, but Edward and the good monk were the sole witnesses of the fearful agonies of the iron frame, which maintained so terrible a conflict with death. The spasms which convulsed it were so frequent and agonizing, that Father Nicholas would not permit the attendance either of Jacqueline or Margaret. All that could be done was done ; but alas ! human aid was of no avail ; for, as Roger fiendishly observed, " the envenomed dart would do its work !"

The Herculean constitution of de Carteret wrestled through the night, and part of the next

day, with the bodily torments which every moment threatened dissolution. Towards mid-day, the violent throes of nature ceased; a total respite from pain followed, and hope revived in the heart of Edward, but Father Nicholas only shook his head.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

It was about the third hour of noon, when Edward, with haggard looks, presented himself before his wife and cousin, and in a voice dry and husky, yet, with a manner unnaturally calm, entreated them to summons all their fortitude to their aid, and follow him to the chamber of his dying father. Margaret clung to him with speechless terror, but Jacqueline, arousing all the firmness of her soul, set the example of fortitude, and instantly led the way. Edward pressed his trembling wife to his bosom, and supporting her tottering frame with his arm, fol-

lowed the slow but firm step of the Norman maiden. The door of the chamber of death was open; they entered, but shrunk back appalled. The knight sat propped up in bed; a mortal palor was spread over his late healthful countenance; his lips were livid, his features fallen; yet the sunken eye recovered somewhat of its animated fire as it fell upon the two fair beings who, scarce able to repress a cry of anguish, stood as though transfixed before him.

“Come hither, my dear children,” he exclaimed, “and let me embrace and bless ye each and all, ere the last brief hour allotted to me glides away. Alack, dear ones,” he continued, when having affectionately kissed the brow of each, and with simple earnestness pronounced his blessing as they one after another sunk upon their knees beside his bed, and buried their faces in the covering to smother their sobs; “alack, dear ones, ye shake the fortitude, with which I had hoped to meet this stroke of fate. I thought I could have parted with life, as

from an old friend whom I had every reason to love and regret, yet with whom I could at the same time exchange farewells calmly, in the firm belief of soon re-uniting under still brighter auspices! Alack! now that I look on those young faces, but yesterday so beaming with joy, and see them pale and contracted with sorrow on my account, I feel that it costs my spirit a keener struggle to separate from mortality than I had calculated, and the pleasing dreams of a green old age, made happy by your affection, and enlivened by the merry prattle of a second generation, comes o'er my heart again—but it cannot be!—God's will be done!"—he paused, and the sobs, which his agonized listeners could no longer repress, broke through the gloomy chamber.

The good old knight passed his hand several times across his eyes, but subduing the emotion which theirs occasioned, he sought to comfort them—"I beseech ye, dear children," he said feebly, "I do beseech ye, yield not thus to your

unavailing grief. Could I but see those loved faces calm and resigned, my spirit would depart without a struggle. Look up dear ones!—I would give this my last hour of life to see a radiant smile on your countenances, such as on this day but three short weeks ago (thy bridal day my son) spoke the bliss of all!—his weeping listeners did look up, but not to smile. The change that had already come over his loved venerated countenance, struck terror to their very souls; with an icy shudder, they again buried their faces to hide the fresh torrent of tears that would gush forth—“And thou too, my poor Jacqueline,” continued the knight tenderly, “thou who hast ever evinced so dauntless a mind, and so firm a soul—thou too, dost show but little courage now! look up, dear wench, and set the example of fortitude to our poor little Margery and this poor boy of mine, who in his over love to his old father, forgets that he be a soldier and a man.”

“My dear, dear father,” exclaimed Edward

in a broken voice, "I forget every thing in the terrible thought that I am about to lose so good, so—" poor Edward could get no further. The dying man brushed a tear from his eyes with one hand, and with the other grasped that of his son."

"Right, right, my boy, thy tears be nature's proper offering! mine heart receives them, e'en while I chide!—but if thou can'st, Edward, command them now. Sit here and list to me—but first, raise that little drooping flower by thy side—Edward, I know thou lovest her well, and will most tenderly cherish her, so I have no charge to give thee on that score! Edward raised his weeping wife and placed her on a seat at the head of the bed. Jacqueline stationed herself on the opposite side, and seeing that her uncle was ill at ease, she raised and rested his head on her bosom. He smiled affectionately' and after drawing a few rapid and oppressed breathings, resumed "My children, I have a parting word to say to ye all, and but a short

space to say it in, my sand is ebbing fast, I feel that the icy hand of death is on me. Dear Margery, wipe away those gushing tears, and be thou the first to list to me."

"I cannot—I cannot!" sobbed Margaret, clasping his cold hand in both of hers, and pressing it to her bosom—"I cannot hear you talk thus of dying—no, no, it cannot be! you were so well, so happy yesterday!—dearest father, you cannot, you must not die!"

"My daughter," said the dying Seigneur, in a low voice, "'tis not for thou or me to arraign the will of Heaven!"

"But Heaven will hear my supplications, dear St. Ouen, I have bethought me of one whose skill may yet restore us all to joy!—do not exhaust your strength by talking, I shall soon return!" she pressed her lips to his hand, replaced it softly on the bed, and with a rapid step moved away.

"And whither goest thou child?—I pray thee leave me not!" said Sir Phillip feebly

At this moment the door was thrown open, and La Blanche Vêtue entered—Margaret stopt short, and clasping her hands exclaimed “The saints be praised !”

It was not with her usual steady, majestic step that this mysterious woman now traversed the large apartment; nor with her usual stern fixedness of feature—she heeded not the energetic exclamation of the young wife, but brushed past her with rapid strides; nor paused, till she reached the foot of the bed—and there she stood and fixed her bright, searching, grey eye intently upon the dying man.—short and silent was the scrutiny—she raised her clasped hands above her head, and murmuring “’too late—too late !” turned away with an expression of bitter anguish on her withered features. The import of those dreadful words fell upon the hearts of all present; none had power to speak or move. As for Margaret, she stood rivetted to the spot with arms outstretched, as if she would still detain the wild being, of whom, in the extremity

of her despair, she was going in search, at the moment she made her appearance.

The silence which followed was scarcely less oppressive than the awful one of death so soon about to ensue; and when it was at length rudely broken in upon by the loud, shrill blast of a horn at the outer gate—the occupants of that stilly chamber started as though the mighty trumpet which will one day summons the earth to judgment, had sounded on their ear.—It startled the dying Christian from the lethargy into which he had sunk; he half raised his head from the throbbing bosom on which it still rested, and like an old war-horse, his vigor seemed suddenly restored by the stirring sound.

“’Tis no common blast!” he exclaimed, “Edward see to it—” Scarce conscious of what he did, the young man left the room, and in the hall met a royal messenger from England, who had just been admitted, and who having been already informed of the heart-rending occurrence which had taken place, presented his

despatch with much courtesy and deeply marked concern. Edward returned to the chamber of death, bearing with him the kingly mandate, which was intended to confer earthly dignities and honours on one, who, in another short hour, would ask nothing of earth beyond a few feet of excavated ground, wherein his perishable frame might moulder and mingle with its parent dust—and as he, with this sickening thought, placed the packet within the cold and clammy hand stretched forth to receive it, he turned away and shuddered.

“Here Edward,” said his father, “mine eyes be grown dim, tell me the contents of this parchment as briefly as thou canst—these be the royal arms of England, be they not?”

“E’en so, my father,” replied Edward, smothering down his terrible emotion “and brought by a King’s messenger,” he next unfolded the royal presents and glanced hurriedly over the contents, but, with eyes so dim and unsteady, he could scarce make himself master of them.

“What says our royal master?” asked the knight feebly. Edward made several efforts to clear his voice :

“My father, our gracious sovereign is pleased to express his royal thanks for the good and valiant service ye have rendered him ; and it is moreover his gracious pleasure, in testimony of his approbation, to appoint ye Captain of these Isles—there is also something respecting certain privileges to you and your heirs, and to our Islanders, which I cannot now see to decypher, and which would but fatigue your mind to hear.”

“Enough my son ! ’twere needless further to awaken the pride and vanities of life, which have mayhap been too predominant with me, as with all ; yet, meseems, it were not sinful that my heart should glow with honest pride, that I bequeath thee an untarnished name ! Be it thy care, Edward, that it thus descend to posterity—here boy, let me hold the royal token of favour from my young King, and pray God in his mercy to bless him, and give him a long life, and

many a subject with a heart as faithful as mine own!"—he grasped the parchment between both his quivering hands, murmured a few words, and fell back fainting.

Father Nicholas who stood apart in the recess of the window, and who acted in the double capacity of leech and spiritual comforter, came instantly forward. The sufferer was restored to consciousness, and his fast decaying strength recruited by the powerful cordial the Father administered ; but his moments had well nigh reached their close. The touching offices for the dying were then performed, and the worthy Seigneur of St. Ouen participated in them with a composure and steadfastness, which bespoke a mind at peace with God—itself—and the world. When the voice of Father Nicholas ceased, the silence in the chamber remained unbroken, but low, smothered sobs from without reached the ear of the dying man. On enquiring what it meant, and being informed that his weeping household and many of his retainers were

kneeling in the corridor, to join in the prayers which were offered up, he asked to be raised in his bed that he might take farewell of them!—Edward, pale and tearless, assisted Father Nicholas to raise the massive frame from its recumbent posture, and seating himself on the bed, he supported the loved and venerated form which was so soon to be removed from his sight. The sorrow-stricken menials were then admitted; they came in two and two, their feet thoughtfully divested of their shoes, and their heads drooping on their sorrowing breasts. One after another they arranged themselves with respectful and solemn demeanour around the room.

The knight did not speak till all had entered, and he had swallowed another reviving cordial, which he requested might be given him. Restored by the draught and animated by the sight of so many familiar faces, he addressed them in a low distinct voice which was audible to all:

“My faithful domestics and serfs,” he said,

“ I thank ye for your prayers, and would now bequeath ye my last blessing. Look on me, all of ye, and behold how brief, how frail a thing is life, to the highest as well as to the lowest of us. Yester morn, most of ye must have hailed me full of vigor and health—confident in the anticipations of a happy old age ! Now, ye see me helpless as an infant, stretched on the bed of death—doomed to sudden decay, like a lusty oak felled in the full vigour of its maturity. In me, ye see before ye, a striking instance of the nothingness of man ! Yestern, who was there could compete with me in strength ?—who was there could rival with me in happiness ?—and now behold !—my strength spent—my earthly hopes extinguished, and my fainting spirit alone supported by the consolations of our most Holy Church ! My good people, let this convince ye that 'tis better to place our hopes of happiness in Heaven only ”—here the sobs of his listeners burst out. He paused till they had ceased, then resumed, but in a less distinct voice, and evi-

dently with much painful effort—"Ye have been liege and trusty knaves, my masters, and right well proved your fidelity in the late dire strait from which it pleased God to deliver us—I pray ye now accept my thanks"—here, his breathing became still more oppressive, and he again, though with great difficulty, swallowed a few drops of cordial—"Heaven is my witness, that I have done my best to perform the part of a just and impartial master towards ye, neither sparing praise and reward, nor reproof and punishment; where, on my conscience, I thought it due—but if there be any amongst ye who may think himself aggrieved, I would fain make restitution to such a one before I die—so let him speak?"

"Ah! notre Seigneur! notre Seigneur! we have nothing to ask of ye but your forgiveness, and your blessing!" exclaimed the eldest of the retainers.

"Nothing! nothing! the Holy Virgin be our witness!" murmured every one present.

"I thank ye, my masters," said the knight

with renewed energy, “and now my trusty ones, *my* duty towards ye is over—but not *your*’s to me. Remember that in this your brave young Seigneur, I shall live for ye—be ye then faithful to him as ye have been to me, and I will promise for him that he will, in return, be kind and just.”

“We will! so help us God and our Lady,” responded all in a voice.

“And may God and our Lady bless ye!” exclaimed the knight in a voice almost extinct, solemnly joining his hands and stretching them out towards the heart-stricken little assembly who had simultaneously sunk upon their knees. A low, heart-felt ‘amen’ burst from the lips of all—then obeying a signal from Father Nicholas, they arose one after another, cast a long, tearful look on their kind, good master, and with even a lower obeisance than their habitual respect exacted from them, left the chamber with noiseless tread and swimming eyes.

When the last had departed, the dying man glanced around him, as if to assure himself that

those he loved were still there—his countenance expressed satisfaction and he murmured “Margery”—In a moment Margaret was on her knees beside him.

“Margery,” he said, in a voice scarce above a whisper, yet perfectly distinct to the ear of each silent listener, “Love my Jacqueline, she hath been to me a most dear daughter; let her be to thee a sister—thy home, her home—Edward, my son, . . . all . . . the Lord bless and comfort . . .”—his voice died away: a tremor ran through his frame; he relinquished Margaret’s hand and tried to grasp that of his son—but in vain—his head sunk more heavily on his pillow and then he was motionless, with eye upraised and look calm as that of an infant—the fall of a pin might have been heard in that moment of speechless, breathless dread! A low sigh floated over the stilly chamber—it was succeeded by the appalling silence of death! neither sob nor movement from those kneeling around that sacred bed broke in upon it!—at

length, a gentle rustling preceded the fall of some light burden—Edward unburied his pale contracted face, and saw his wife stretched stiff and motionless on the floor beside him; he clasped her in his arms, and with a convulsive sob bore her from the chamber of death.

Jacqueline, wan and tearless, arose from her knees—she gazed long on the pale, calm face before her, and then, with trembling hand, she closed the sightless eyes, which had, in life, been wont to look so fondly on her, she kissed the bloodless lips which had never unclosed but to speak words of kindness—she called him by the endearing name of ‘father’ and in the anguish of her heart, she forgot that she had any other parent than he who had been so cruelly taken from her. Alas! poor Jacqueline! arm thy noble soul with fortitude! thy cup of sorrow is not yet full to the brim—The messenger whom thy kind uncle had despatched to Cherbourg, to learn tidings of Sir Julien de Montessy, is even now returned with tidings that will cause

it to overflow !—the vessel which bore thy devoted lover from thee hath never reached its port !

END OF VOL. III.

Should these **RECORDS** of a remote generation of the Islanders of **La Manche**, a generation not unworthy the present race, who (without flattery is it said) in the present flourishing condition and daily increasing importance of their little Isles afford a striking proof that independence and prosperity may be obtained by persevering industry, sobriety, and moral rectitude, however small and insignificant in its origin, be the community where these wholesome virtues are cherished—should then these unpretending volumes be so fortunate as to have excited any degree of interest in the fates of those whose individual histories they set forth—a **Second Series** of “**THE FORTRESS**” will detail the varied events which cannot be crowded into the present narrative.







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